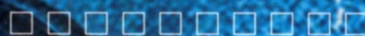


EXPOSED FROM BEGINNING TO END! **HUGE SPLINTER CELL GUIDE**

■ PLAYSTATION WORLD



■ ISSUE #012

PSW

AUSTRALIA'S ONLY INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

FIRST AUSTRALIAN REVIEW

SILENT HILL 3

REST IN PEACE RESIDENT EVIL?

SSX3

First-ever view at the summit!

THE HULK

Earth's mightiest action game?

ICE NINE

Australia's metal gear killer?

EYETOY: PLAY

Your PS2 can see you!

NBA STREET 2

Funktacular review

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THE HULK
Either him or Kermit on crack.

PSW CONTENTS

ISSUE 12



020 ICE NINE Tits- check. Curvacious figure - check. Silenced pistol...



034 SSX 3 It's one big mountain in EA's Big new game.

GLOBAL

THE FINAL PRE-E3 PSW ISSUE, YET WE'VE STILL MANAGED TO SCRATCH TOGETHER SOME BRAND NEW, AS BOXED, 674 SCREENS. IT'S THE 900 DEGREE RACING WHEEL THAT HAS US REALLY REVVING THOUGH.

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- 013 WIN! WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED
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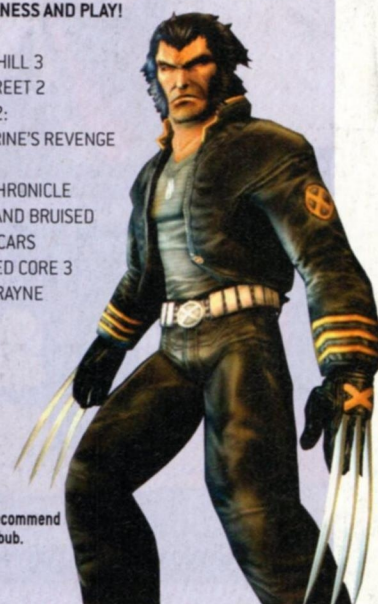
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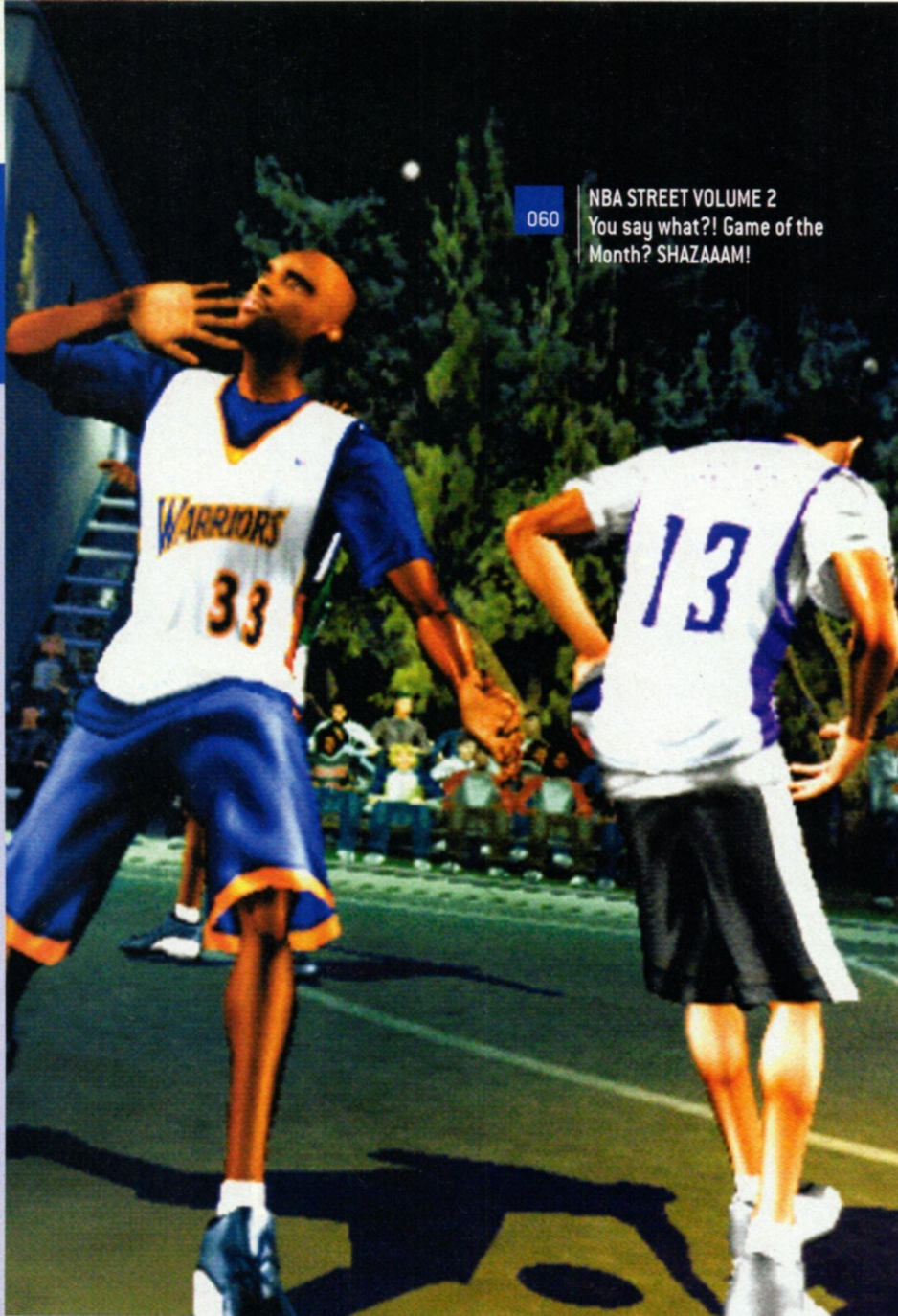
REVIEWS

FOUR OUT OF NINE GAMES THIS MONTH ARE MUST BUYS- IT'S CERTAINLY A STRONG ISSUE. RIDICULE THE KIDDIE FARCE THAT IS *DARK CHRONICLE* IN FRONT OF YOUR FRIENDS, AND THEN SLITHER TO YOUR ROOM UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS AND PLAY!

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WOLVERINE'S REVENGE
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X-MEN 2 I highly recommend you keep reading, bub.



060

NBA STREET VOLUME 2
You say what?! Game of the Month? SHAZAAAM!

PSW CONTENTS

ISSUE 12

FEATURES

THE CYNICS OUT THERE CALL THEM FILLERS, WE LIKE TO CALL THEM FEATURES. YOU KNOW, THE BITS OF THE MAG THAT SHOW SOME CREATIVITY IN THEIR CONCEPT. AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THERE AREN'T MANY.

086 32 THINGS

HOOKERS, HUGE BREASTS, AND HUNTERS. IT'S THE 32 THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO WITH YOUR PS2 BEFORE YOU DIE!



SOLUTIONS

MASSSSIVE SPLINTER CELL GUIDE. THE WHOLE GAME! AND IT'S NOT EVEN THE BEST THING IN THE ISSUE!! PLENTY OF CHEATS TOO - YOU EVIL BASTARDS.

076 SPLINTER CELL

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BROWSER

ALL THE STUFF THAT JUST DOESN'T WANT TO FIT ANYWHERE ELSE!

092 DVD RELEASES

POINT BREAK, BUFFY, FUTURAMA AND MORE.

096 COVER DVD DETAILS

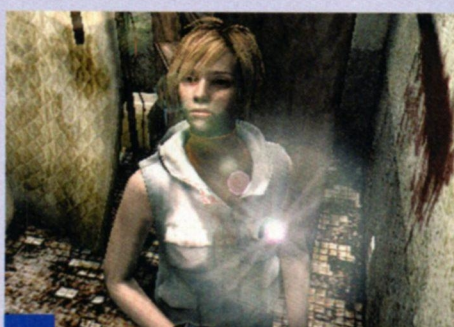
IT'S GOOD TO KNOW WHAT YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR AS YOU SLIP THAT SMOOTH, SHINY DISC, INTO YOUR PS2'S TANTALISING CREVICE.

098 NEXT MONTH

E3. THAT MEANS GT4, METAL GEAR SOLID 3, CASTLEVANIA, AND A WHOLE LOT OF BOOTH BABES.



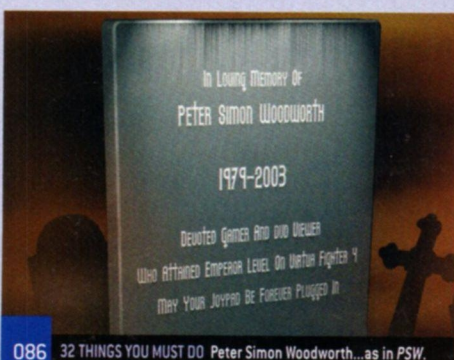
074 SUBSCRIBE Even Dr. Jones thinks it's a good idea!



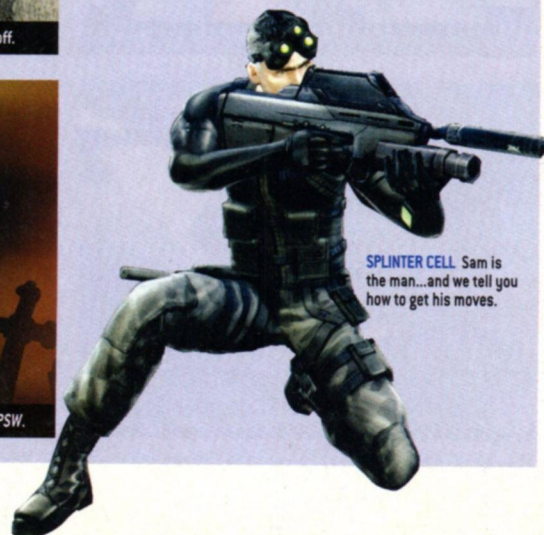
054 SILENT HILL 3 A honey, but those bloodstains turn us off.



092 DVD RELEASES And this isn't even where the sex stops.



086 32 THINGS YOU MUST DO Peter Simon Woodworth...as in PSW.



SPLINTER CELL Sam is the man...and we tell you how to get his moves.

湾岸

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PlayStation 2



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PSW WELCOME



EDITORIAL

THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE HELD WITHIN

these 100 PSW pages. Got a nationalistic chip on your shoulder? Experience gold and very green pride with *Ice Nine*. It is a preview after all, so optimism comes equipped as standard. Meanwhile, it's a well-known fact that more than two thirds of everyone likes either blue or green the bestest. Cue *Hulk* feature. Or, funnily enough, just maybe you might like videogames, so the first preview about the true sequel to the PS2's original hit should be better than *SSX*. And those of you for which PSW acts as your buyer's guide, then start saving now for the several must buys covered in this issue's review section.

For me though, as someone within an industry with a fetish for anticipation and future potential, our *32 Things...* feature is the refreshing highlight. While I don't agree with everything Jon says (#19...ahem), and the morbid angle is a tad depressing, the

unashamed celebration of the moment the feature proclaims is endearing. Whereas, as a conventional gaming magazine, we're typically finished with coverage of a product once we run the review (apart from the odd playguide or brief mention in the letters section), this feature reiterates that, as gamers, we like games because they're just pretty darn good fun to play. *32 Things...* helps unify everyone's actual gaming experience through the PSW peripheral, it attempts to socially validate an unvalidatable hobby, and that's quite nice. And while it appears as only a quaint little filler feature, a trivial handful of pages interspersed with mild humour, until online gaming hits it big on PS2, it's the best way to bring together a community based around personally unique but triumphantly similar experience of the fun, wonder and humour of games. How dishearteningly romantic. Still, enjoy.

/ JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE

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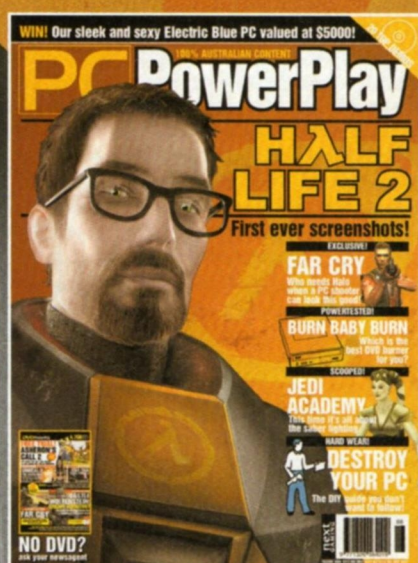
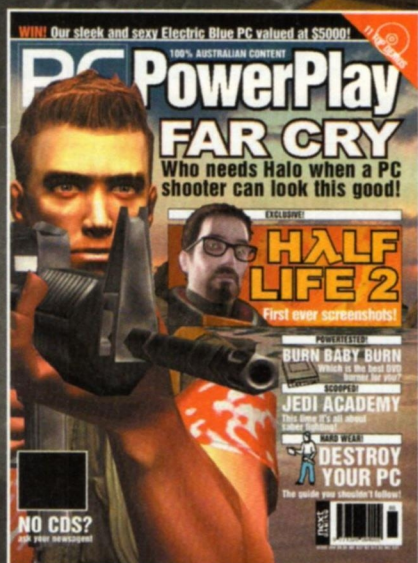
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GLOBAL

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAHBLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH

GLOBAL this month...

- 08 Gran Turismo 4
- 09 E 3 Preview
- 10 Beyond Good & Evil
- 10 Deus Ex 1.5
- 10 The End Of Atari?



GRAN CANYISMO Polyphony seem keen to push the rally elements.



GT4: LEGOLAND The 25 polygon arch - truly Next Gen.



SKYLINE ON DIRT? The way of the future, obviously.

THE RETURN

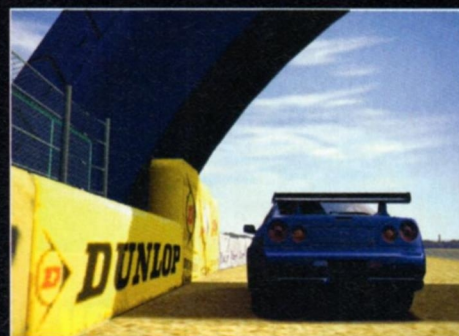
GRAN INDEED, TURISMO 4

■ AND WE'RE STILL NOT SURE WHAT'S UP WITH THE NAME

We've held back sending the mag for this story right here. Pre-GTA3, the PlayStation 2's greatest series, has just given birth to a new family member, and it's just a wee bit shiny. While most of the E3 feast will be served next issue, the glory of the hors d'oeuvre is clear for all to see. *Gran Turismo 4*, the latest in the Gran Turismo series, deserves such a definitive introduction. After all, *Gran Turismo* was one of the most powerful forces in bringing gaming to the mainstream.

To the game: online, but only up to six players. More than 500 cars, both of the past, present, and, judging by the corporate success of *GT: Tokyo-Genève*, future. 'Better' AI. Yet, no car damage, no online voice support and, for the dickheads out there, no people sitting in cars. All this info came straight from the mouth of the man behind the series, Kazunori Yamauchi. Clearly, some disappointment (damage in *GT*: the greatest pipe dream of all), but the promise of online and the return of the mammoth car list, as well as the name itself, will ensure success come its release...sometime next year - the most painful disappointment of them all.

But, we're saving the best news for last. Parallel to the game, Logitech are developing a 900 degree racing wheel. About time too. Expect plenty more next month, but for now, enjoy the screens.



BUY VOLLEYS TODAY! Don't tell me they're advertising the tires!

11 Need For Speed:
Underground
11 X-Men: Legends
12 Medal Of Honour:
Rising Sun

13 WIN Wakeboarding
Unleashed!
13 Charts



ALPHA MALE Fear not, snobby Eurowannabe, the Romeo's in.



KEY PRODUCT PLACEMENT Not a great place to park though.



THE CHAIRMAN'S SPOT The new license test - snaking a park.



IS HE MOVING? Where's the motion blur when you need it?



LOOKS EXCITING At least he found a parking spot in the shade.



TRACK CHOICE Rally and tarmac racing, now in one track!



PITY THE CAMERAMAN Too busy enjoying all the nice purty clouds. Run fool run!



THERE'S AN E And there's the 3... It's E3. Can't argue with that.

ECSTASY X3

SEE THE FUTURE NOW

■ IT'S SHOW TIME FOR THE GAMES INDUSTRY

DURING OUR COOL WINTER MONTHS, AUSSIE GAMES

journalists have the chance to flee stale corporate office blocks and rotting feet, and jet to smoggy Los Angeles to see the biggest games of the year in a giant stinking indoor arena that dwarfs the old 'G. The annual Electronic Entertainment Expo trade show (otherwise known as E3) is the start of the games season for many publishers, eager to show us what we'll be buying this Christmas. PSW will of course be there to get all the news, all the show gossip, and all the behind-the-scenes stuff no other magazine has access to, along with the only DVD footage, screenshots and information you can rely upon. We'll be roadtesting *Gran Turismo 4*, chatting with Hideo Kojima about new *Metal Gear Solid* games, playing *Resident Evil Online* (now known as *Outbreak*) with real people, grappling in a strictly heterosexual way with Brock Lesnar, and laughing at fat American journalists.

Below we reveal just a handful of the earth-shattering games you can expect to see next month. And there'll be more. More than you can count on the fingers and toes of you and six close personal friends. Plus there'll be photos of promotional girls used to arouse the trouser muscles of passing journalists (see image below). Just remember that every title is subject to availability, and the all too real possibility of exhaustion after walking 15km per day around a crowded show hall.

Sony: *Gran Turismo 4*, *Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain*, *Ratchet and Clank 2*, *SOCOM 2*, *Everquest*, *Jak II*

Konami: *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Castlevania*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*

Capcom: *Resident Evil Outbreak* (formerly *RE Online*), *Maximo 2*, *Onimusha 3*

Electronic Arts: *Lord of The Rings: Return of The King*, *SSX3*, *Out of Bounds*, *MOH: Rising Sun*, *Harry Potter - Quidditch*

Activision: *Tony Hawk Underground*, *X-Men: Legends*



THE FUTURE'S LOOKING UP Just look how he's choking at the crucial time.

BRAND SHENANIGANS

FAREWELL INFOGRAMES

■ AND THE END OF ATARI AS WE KNOW IT

It's time to return to the op-shop from where your uber-cool Atari shirt came, and sell it right on back, because the Atari name has just lost its once-great appeal. For the publisher formerly known as Infogrames (yes the one with the surely unnecessary r) has changed its name to Atari Interactive – and, for Australia, Atari Interactive Australia. Sure, Infog- sorry, Atari, actually have some rather wacky games out (*Silent Hill 3* and *Enter the Matrix* anybody?), but walking around with a multinational corporation on your shirt, unless you are going for some advanced third-wave irony, just ain't cool. Even more tragic though is the fact that we'll never solve the riddle of exactly how to pronounce Infogrames. Or not.



FRIDAY DANCE The retirement home's weekly highlight.



HOVER AHOY Water views, 297 bedrooms.



NIETZSCHE AHOY

TO GOOD AND EVIL, AND BEYOND!

■ BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL ARRIVES, PHOTOGRAPHERS CRINGE

Now as French as *Rayman* happens to be, there is no denying there are crepes of delectable visual finery and tasty gameplay design held within its shiny DVD casing. Sure, the game's never going to appeal to some (okay, the overwhelming majority), but it's hard to deny the consistent quality of the *Rayman* titles Michel Ancel has developed over the last decade. But this Frenchie has bigger plans. Oh yeah. Gone are the limbless clowns, to be replaced by – photographers. And they say the Japanese are quirky.

The game we're referring to, of course, is *Beyond Good and Evil*, the latest valued but undeniably weird Gallic Ubi Soft title. We've played it, and it's actually rather nice. There are hovercrafts, fat pig guys, cartoony monsters, and a humanoid

lead girl – with, for a game blessed primarily with Lara's favourite third-person over-the-shoulder view, a suitably fruity figure (whatever that means). Of course officially, virtual girls just aren't hot, but we'd still prefer her over the hog.

Anyway, the game revolves around hunting for some special jewels that together have a mystical power (or some crap). The interesting part arrives with the photography aspect of the game. At any point you can whip out your Polaroid and snap a shot of any of the wildlife that inhabits the game. Pets, seagulls, everything – people will actually pay you for these shots. Heck, you can even spend this cash, on nifty gear like ship upgrades.

We only had a little glimpse, but if you can get past the cutesy *Raymanesque* colour, this one could be for you. Fans of the adventure series should definitely take note.

DEUS EX COMING

YES, HAHA, WE SAID SEX

■ BUT WHAT VERSION WILL THE PS2 SEE?

Deus Ex is arguably the best sci-fi, conspiracy-laden first-person cyborg adventure/shooter video game, ever. It therefore comes as a monumental disappointment that rumours are suggesting PS2 owners will not have the pleasure of experiencing the game's upcoming sequel. Such talk is founded on the relative age of the PS2's hardware next to modern PCs for which *DX2: Invisible War* is designed and the difficulties this would pose for

developers porting the title to the world's favourite DVD player. However, another auxiliary rumour has also been cruising the strip, suggesting that instead of the sequel proper, PS2 owners alone will get to enjoy a totally new game with a unique story set in J.C. Denton's universe. Whether this will simply prove to be a glorified expansion intending to only exploit the thirst of a massive userbase begging for some *Deus Ex*(ual) experiences, or a valuable new insight into the game's mysterious futuristic setting remains to be seen. As

is typical for the final prE3 issue...expect more following the show.

ROBOCOP 4 Withsweet flared Gundam elbows.



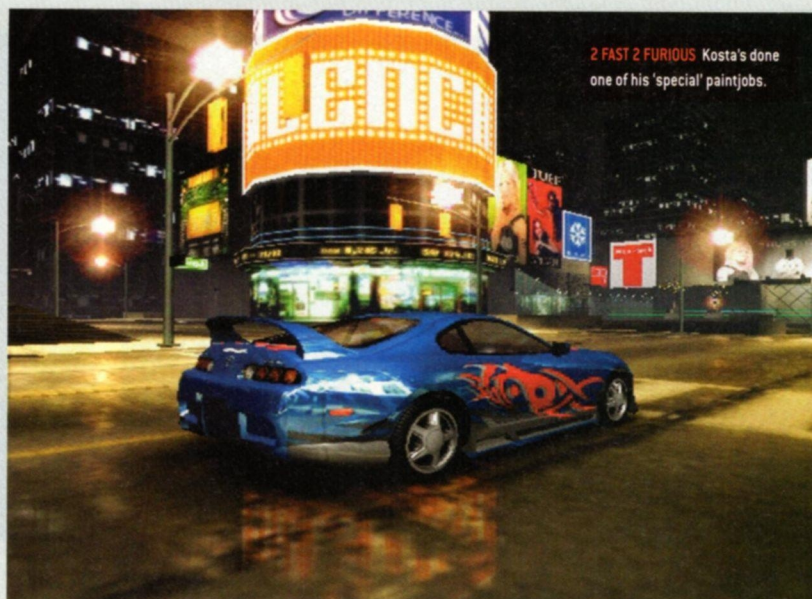
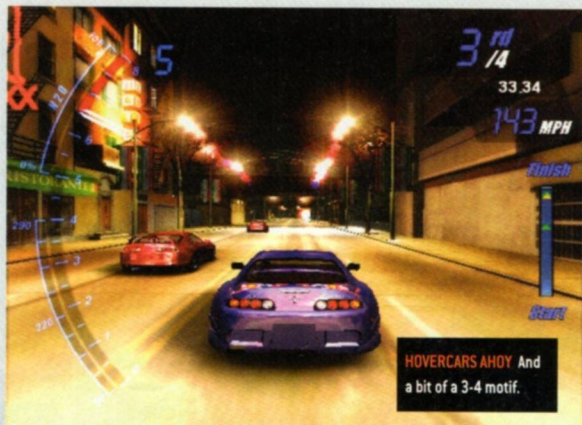
COLUMNS Not the return of the Master System classic.



THE FUTURE OF SEWERAGE PSW knows its plumbing.



FEAR SARS Not even the future's soldiers can escape.



CARS AND SHIT NEED FOR SPEED GOES UNDERGROUND

EA'S CLASSIC GETS MECHANICAL

Need for Speed has always been a loyal companion to the everygamer. Cops, and cars, and jumps – it's hard to go wrong. Yet, if there's ever been something missing from the series, it's the searingly wannabe badass attitude of *GTA*, or even *Driver*, as well as the customisation seen in the *GTs* of the world. *NFS Vehicles* have always been unscratchably squeaky clean and numerous, yet also frustratingly superficial in their automotive attraction. Variety in the

game would only come in car selection, not tinkering. Thankfully, EA are spicing things up with the next version, *Need for Speed Underground*.

Now, this "Underground" addition to the title, judging from EA's press ramble, seems to indicate the kind of corporate badassism manufactured by such Hollywood blockbusters as *xXx*, or from alternative promotional strategies only Acclaim could engineer. To be honest though, we're not letting snobbery spoil a gaming experience.

The game's set to feature gritty,

night-time, urban environments, twenty licensed vehicles (such as from Subaru, Toyota, Mitsubishi and more), and car parts from many of the world's renowned customisation specialists, including Jackson Racing (tee hee). As long as we can still elude cops by taking aerial shortcuts and lay plenty of rubber, we'll generally be fairly satisfied. Developer Black Box is back, assuring that the game will fare fairly nicely when it ships early next year. Vroom already.



YES INDEEDY NFSU's cars even have side rear view mirrors!



CLAW FRENZY! Use the frenzy, use the frenzy!



MICHELIN MAN Enjoying a giant game of Twister.



TAKE HIM OUT Do Prof. X proud, you suck!



FIREWORKS Storm losing her cool. Ah sweet Halle.

LEGENDS, X-MEN

AH, WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT - MORE X ACTION.

MUTANTASTIC TACTICAL TEAM ACTION GAME

Activision, as these publishing companies so regularly do, made an announcement this month. Climbing atop the mountain of *X-Men 2* hype, they tore the curtain from what could well be a compelling title. *X-Men: Legends*, due next year, will allow gamers to assemble, train and lead their own squad of mutants into battle with frightening foes such as the Morlocks, Brotherhood of Mutants and Sentinels.

While at this stage it appears players are restricted to using X-Men within their squad, the choice of over 15 characters is promised, including obvious heroes, as

well as the much cooler Colossus, Beast, and Gambit. Combat is to be based around teamwork and character selection, and emphasises each mutant's individual specialties. Expect to besiege an enemy with a blizzard from Storm, keep them pinned with Cyclops' optic blasts, and surprise them with a slice and dice Wolverine assault. How exactly the battles are presented, and whether the combat will be purely real-time are both still to be revealed, but we do know that four-player co-op mode is in place, and that the development of character skills and levels will be critical to the game's success. This one should be at E3, so stay alert for more news soon.



HONORABLE SUN

MEDAL OF HONOUR FIGHTS AGAIN!

■ SUN RISES ON PACIFIC CONFLICT

ENACTING THE AVERAGE JOE'S ROLE WITHIN THE theatre of World War II is the greatest reason for *Medal of Honor's* success. This has never been more evident than now, with the arrival of the earliest shells of information about this year's *MoH* title, *Rising Sun*. Taking control of Joe Griffin, it's time to tackle the Pacific, and have at the Japanese in a tropical environment that is becoming rather common in games recently. 10 missions, all available in co-operative mode, will take you around the Pacific rim, from Pearl Harbor, to Burma, the Phillipines and more. There'll be the usual *MoH* variety in terms of gameplay styles, so it's fair to expect some 'shooting on rails' moments, as well as everything from stealth undercover work to all-out

blasting action. The producers have stated that they are trying to replicate the authentic experience of fighting in the Pacific against the Japanese, with more close-up combat based around guerilla warfare, more desperate kamikaze-style AI tactics, as well as appropriate weaponry. There has also been mention of some basic mission branching and moral, path-altering decisions. Rescue a hostage from the clutches of the enemy or sneak by, feigning ignorance? You never know, they could end up rewarding you – whether it's a moral question at all however... Look for it just before Christmas. Also, EA has mentioned that next year's *MoH* iteration will feature Joe's bro Donny Griffin, who actually features early in this game. They promise to share some kind of relation – what exactly remains to be seen.



THE EYES HAVE IT Someone's been playing too much PS2.

NO LEASH THERE

WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED- WIN WIN WIN!

■ SET TO REVIVE EXTREME SPORTS GAMES

While it arrived just a fraction too late for a review this issue, Activision's *Wakeboarding Unleashed* is a title we're hanging for when it hits shelves in June. Somewhat predictably for an extreme sports game, the mechanics are reminiscent of the many Tony Hawk-style games on the market – yet the addition of the wakeboard and the principles behind the sport, from what we can so far see, elevate this one at least into the 'yeah, I've heard that game sounds good, I might rent it' class, and perhaps beyond. Certainly, and while you'll have to excuse our absolute lack of hardcore wakeboarding jargon, holding the rope thing as you skim way wide round a corner before slicing back in and launching off the wake into a flip or two and then landing with a grind on a truck driving along the bank, is an experience no other game can provide.

And thus, thanks to Activision, it's competition time. We've got four copies

and a bunch of stickers to give away to four readers, so get entering. Write, neatly now, your answer to the question below on the back of an envelope, and send it in to the accompanying address – it's ours!

Question: What connects a wakeboarder to the boat?

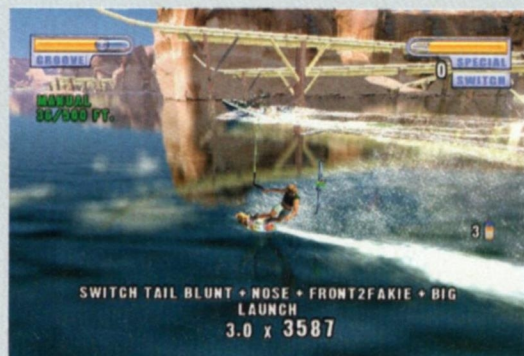
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EVEN SPLITSCREEN... Although, it's looking a little slurpy. (Boom, tish)



100% REALISM Groovy. Looking special. Their tweak method ensures a big launch.



SEASPRAY Ah, we do love our subtle Transformers references.

THE TOP 20 ON PS2 FOR MAY!

SURPRISE! SURPRISE! WHO'D HAVE THUNK IT? GTA IS #1 AGAIN!



inform The Official Australian Games Chart
Compiled by Inform in association with IEAA

W/E 4 May 2003

TOP 20

Best Selling Full Price PlayStation2 Games (over \$50)

1	▲	GTA: Vice City	Adventure
2	▼	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Adventure
3	◆	Grand Theft Auto 3 Ptm	Adventure
4	▲	The Sims	Strategy
5	▲	V8 Supercars	Racing
6	●	X-Men Wolverines Revenge	Adventure
7	▲	Devil May Cry 2	Adventure
8	◆	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	Action
9	▼	Harry Potter Chamber Of Secrets	Adventure
10	▲	Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2	Racing
11	▲	G1 Jockey 3	Sports
12	▲	Tenchu 3: Wrath of Heaven	Adventure
13	▼	Lord Of The Rings Two Towers	Adventure
14	▲	Tiger Woods PGA USA Tour 2003	Sports
15	●	Moto GP 3	Racing
16	▼	Metal Gear Solid 2 Substance	Adventure
17	●	NBA Street 2	Sports
18	●	Dragonball Z: Budokai Fighters	Action
19	▼	FIFA 2003	Sports
20	▼	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Action

● New Entry ◆ Non Mover ▲ Up from last week ▼ Down from last week

Charts can be viewed at
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Dialogue



THE PART OF THE MAGAZINE YOU WRITE, THEN WE TYPE IT UP IN THE CONDUIT ITC FONT AND PUBLISH IT ALL.



SOUL CALIBUR 2 Ah, I can hear that crisp clink of a block as if I'm playing now..

VEGE GHETTO

Dear PSW,
My Name is ssvegetto18 (I do not put my real name on anything for fear of hackers of breaking into my PC through sending this by email). I have been reading your mag for quite a while now, and I was hoping to see if I could get into the letters section (a.k.a. Dialogue) & I was also wondering, if I could submit not only my letter, but my home made music video of *Devil May Cry 2* which I made in *Adobe Premiere* by capturing me playing the game and also capturing cutscenes (then editing it - putting in music and selecting certain scenes). I have a great respect for the DVD presentations you do on

the discs (i.e. the *Devil May Cry* video review) now I was wondering if I am allowed to send it to you, should I send it to you by snail mail (normal) or if I should send it you another way? It would be greatly appreciated and at the slight chance (although I doubt I will be allowed) that you think it's good enough you could put it onto the next issue's disc? Sincerely (Your loyal fan),
ssvegetto18

Firstly, we don't accept reader submissions for the DVD. If we started now, then I'm fairly sure our DVD lads would be out of a job pretty quickly. And, considering the bewildering amount of females they seem to attract ("I'm in the movie industry"), their place within PSW is secured, especially as we approach the weekend. Secondly, your name was listed in the sender box of the email, so, erm, you might want to change that.

WHAT A BALL ACHE!

One thing that I can see from your abuse of *FIFA 2003* is that you're not real football fans and you don't seem to like football much at all. You seem to continually praise *PES2* for its realism and great gameplay, and likewise you criticise *FIFA* for this. The player animation in *PES2* is terrible! The players run like puppets and the goalkeepers fall over rather than diving, and don't let me go on about the shooting and passing. Also it's hard to recognise any individual players because of the poor detail on the team. *FIFA* has great motion capture and almost 100% realistic graphics which help you recognise players easily. (At this point the letter descends into a white noise of endless, pointless rambling)... For example I really like Chunnam Dragons from the Korean league... (See what we mean?)... and I'm sure that many people will agree with me, mainly



LOOK AT THE HAIR! This just sums it up. Only women play FIFA.

MISCELLANEOUS CUTS

I always put the controller in the ****ing memory card slot.
Anon

If you stay up for three straight days, don't play any game with monkeys. Monkeys!
Monkey, via email

To be totally fair to him, he's bald. And he mings. This makes him a bald minger in my book. Am I right?
Nick Knight

The system is your ruler. Repeat after me: the system is my ruler. No one questions the system.
Arran Hanniball

I will now copy and paste this phrase 666 times (because that's an evil number don't you know).
Theps2masta

real football fans.
Phil Marshall, via email

We'll hold our hands up here. *FIFA 2003* is the finest women's football simulation on the PlayStation 2. Happy now?

REALLY SHORT SKIRTS

I'd just like to say that Japanimated women in computer games kick ass! My reasons for this statement are as follows: 1) They are made by the only people that know how a woman's body should look: male computer animators (even though they're fat geeks with glasses that can't get a girl). 2) These women wear really short skirts and really tight tops. And finally 3) These aren't girls that say things like "Oh I broke a nail!" or "Does my bum look big in this?" No, these girls say things more like "Grrr. I am woman, hear me roar!"
Joe, via email

We spent a week trying to find a drawing of a Japanese girl clean enough to print here but returned empty-handed. It's a sick, sick world my friend, and no amount of licking is going to get it any cleaner. Step up Kelly.

MOAN MOAN JOKE MOAN MOAN

I'm sick and tired of reading the same old letter every week in the Dialogue section. "Oh PSW, what is your favourite TV programme (or food, crisps etc.)?" At first I'm sure you loved the idea of your loving readers wanting to find out more about you. But now it's turning a bit old ain't it? Why don't we change the topic? I have an idea, oh wait, I don't.

P.S. I'm the same guy that you mocked just because I was able to put my helicopter into a Pay 'n' Spray in *GTA Vice City*. And yes, it gets wheels.
Pierre

You'll have to be more specific than that, Bucko. We mock thousands of readers on a daily basis. We can't be expected to remember them all.

STEALTH BOMBER

Is it just me, or are stealth games getting boring now? *Metal Gear Solid* was good. *Hitman 2* was OK. *Splinter Cell* looks boring. Admittedly I've not played it yet, but just reading about all the planning that goes into a single mission made me feel tired. It seems to me that every game that comes out these days has a sneaky bit, and I've had enough. Please can we return to the days of shooting someone in the face and not giving a damn about how much sound we make when we're doing it? I know these games are all about realism, but sometimes you can have too much of a good thing. Make it stop. Please.
Dan Edwards, via email

You're right, but you should at least give *Splinter Cell* a chance before you write it off. It may be extremely painstaking but it's also one of the finest action games available on any format. And you can't argue with that. Although you made a decent fist of it.

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO:
Dialogue, PSW,
78 Renwick St,
Redfern NSW 2016
Australia.
psw@next.com.au



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AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

YOUR MOST ANTICIPATED GAMES IN ONE CONVENIENT LIST! VOTE NOW - VOTE OFTEN! EMAIL YOUR TOP FIVE TO PSW@NEXT.COM.AU

1. SoulCalibur II

It's back – the king of the wanted line-up from last month reigns supreme again, obviously riding the wave of hype thanks to our extended preview in issue 11. And heck, PSW reckons she's a worthy victor. Although, considering how few votes we actually receive each month, the standard of competition was hardly remarkable. Also, note the name change – Namco have specifically stated that the game should be spelled *SoulCalibur II*. But what about this then: *Soul Calibur 2*. Aha! The power of the media wins out in the end. Down the list we've got the usual suspects, as well some more creative options. Close to half the votes we receive are dummies or as-yet unplanned sequels. We love em, keep it coming.



■ TYPE: Fighting ■ DISTRIBUTOR: EA ■ ETA: Oct



PSW

HAVE YOUR SAY!

We want to know what games you're most looking forward to. Help us decide which games to cover each month! So send us an email listing the five games that have got you drooling with excitement. Each month, we'll tally up your votes and print the top ten on this page here. Tell us why you want a particular game and we'll include our favourite comments, too. Send your votes to: psw@next.com.au

2. Enter the Matrix



■ TYPE: Action ■ DISTRIBUTOR: Infogrames ■ ETA: May

3. Driver 3



■ TYPE: Action ■ DISTRIBUTOR: Infogrames ■ ETA: Nov

4. Final Fantasy X-2



■ TYPE: RPG ■ DISTRIBUTOR: Sony ■ ETA: 2004

5. Gran Turismo 4



■ TYPE: Racing ■ DISTRIBUTOR: Sony ■ ETA: 2004

6. GTA- Adelaide Hills



■ TYPE: Sim ■ DISTRIBUTOR: Take Two ■ ETA: Never

7. Deus Ex 1.5



■ TYPE: Shooter ■ DISTRIBUTOR: Atari ■ ETA: 2004

8. Resident Evil Outbreak



■ TYPE: Surv. Hor ■ DISTRIBUTOR: THQ ■ ETA: 2004

9. SOCOM

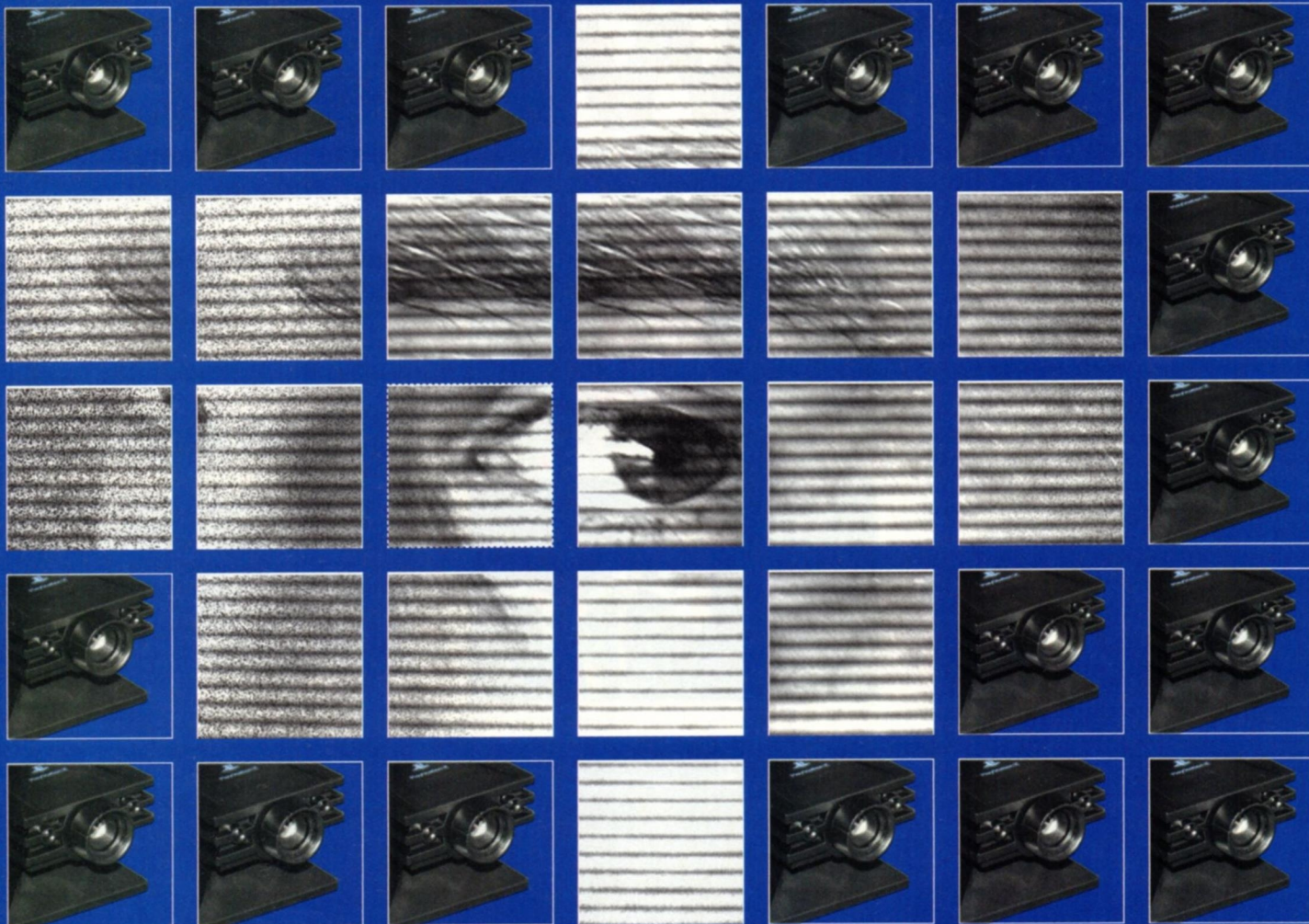


■ TYPE: Shooter ■ DISTRIBUTOR: Sony ■ ETA: July

10. Destruction Derby Arenas



■ TYPE: Crasher ■ DISTRIBUTOR: Sony ■ ETA: LATE 2003



EYETOY: PLAY

ETA
JULY
2003

RRP
\$99.95!

YOUR PS2 IS WATCHING YOUR EVERY MOVE, AND IT WANTS TO PLAY. WELCOME ONE AND ALL TO THE FUTURE OF SHAME-BASED ENTERTAINMENT! BRING YOUR MUM.

TYPE | ERM, EYETOY

PUBLISHER | SONY

GAME GLANCE |

/ Use your hands to wash
/ Use your head to keepy-up
/ Use the webcam to film...

SEE IT ON DVD |

/ Mature, professional men
/ Acting like little monkeys
/ All for you, our readers

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ Totally new game style that's plenty of fun to play
- ▲ World's wackiest selection of mini-games

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ Gameplay's limited and it's far too silly for some
- ▼ Longevity's in doubt, given the samey nature

THERE'S A SCENE IN MINORITY REPORT, SET

in the near future, where Tom Cruise's character looks through data on a screen by using a special glove. He moves his hands to chuck the information around, accompanied by swooshy sounds and lots of fancy blue lighting. It looked all posh and futuristic, so it did. Until now. Now it looks just this side of quaint, and it's all Sony's fault. Because to play with its new EyeToy peripheral, you don't need gloves, or a special screen. You don't even need a normal controller. You just need to not be transparent. That's right: with this little gadget, your PS2 can see your every move. And react to it too.

EyeToy is simple enough for your granny to understand, well, your mum anyway. The pictures give you a clue how it happens. The EyeToy slots happily into one of the PS2's USB ports below the controller sockets, and sits on top of your telly. Stand in front of it, and you appear on the TV screen, with PS2 graphics laid over. Here comes the clever bit – through the power of computers, the graphics on-screen can react to your movements! Want to know how? See the 'Tis Witchcraft!' panel. (Hint: It's not really witchcraft. It's technology.)

This is all pretty revolutionary. The only time we've seen motion sensing tech like this before was in Namco's *Mazan: Flash of the Blade* arcade game. You held a plastic sword and swept it round, but your image never appeared on screen like this. You're finally on telly! You're living the dream. As long as the dream involves punching two-inch high ninjas, of course.

What's impossible to tell from these shots – apart from quite how dumb we looked recording them – is how successfully it works. We were certainly surprised at the speed and accuracy of the motion sensing. You'll need to move as

quickly as you can in many of the games, and it never lags or slows down. If you want to see more, stick this month's DVD in your slot and check out our extensive coverage. We'd like to apologise in advance for the sheer quantity of gurning stupidity you'll see in our attempts to win, though.

EYE DON'T BELIEVE IT...

We don't blame you if you're sceptical, by the way. Traditionally, consoles for peripherals have been, well peripheral. Ill-fated add-ons, from Nintendo's *Rob the Robot* to the Dreamcast's



THE KUNG OF FOO See Joff's power. You will never defeat him!



WASH THE PROBLEM? OK, so Wishi Washi can get a bit dull.



BEAT FREAK



Beat Freak has you touching four areas of the screen in time to the music. It's a bit like an on-screen dance mat. Very fast, very silly. Check the DVD for more footage.

Heaven help us all if they actually combine dance mats with this sort of thing. We'll need the skills of Justin Timberlake or the young Leo Sayer to survive. Which Joff lacks.



KUNG FOO



This is probably *Eyetoy*: Play's finest hour. Little ninja enemies rush at you from all sides. Punch them away and you'll trigger a very satisfying 'thwack' sound as they fly off at great speed. Lee loved the violence.

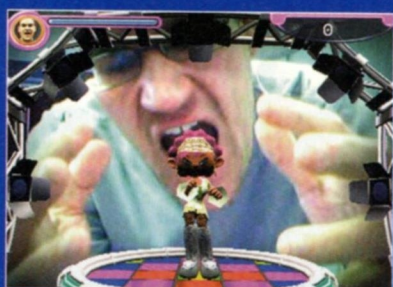
Some enemies even fly into the screen. You'll do well to reach a bonus round that involves smacking wooden boards with your fist. But don't try it at home without an *Eyetoy*, folks. Oh, go on then. It'll teach you some sense.

Samba De Amigo maracas, have either been limited in scope, far too expensive or both. Even the G-Con2, Namco's excellent light-gun, can only be used with a handful of games. But there's one toy that must be giving Sony hope – dance mats. With sales of PSone going through the roof and the first *Dancing Stage* game for PS2 out soon, the Bemani craze is sweeping the nation. No wonder this first *Eyetoy* game, called *Eyetoy: Play*, is targeted at the same folks: hyperactive teens, party people and anyone out for a bit of fun, whether they're hardcore gamers or not. They've chosen a monkey as the logo.

Once you've jumped around like a blue-assed baboon for half an hour, you'll see why.

WHAT A CORNEA IDEA...

We've heard some odd rumours about the sort of games being developed for *Eyetoy*, but to be honest we wouldn't be surprised if there's little more than a trickle of titles throughout the lifecycle of the PlayStation2. Know what? We don't care. This is enough for now. *Eyetoy: Play*, which comes with the camera, is actually a collection of 12 mini-games aimed squarely at a family crowd. We'll tell you about each and >



SWEET JESUS NO! Keep your mouth off game ladies, freak.



WET SLINGER Sight gags, like this toy-based one, are essential.

KEEP UPS



Head the ball to keep it in the air, but don't fret: it's a lot slower than a real ball, so even non-soccer-loving simpletons like Joff can manage multiple keep-ups. Just.

Knock it into (surprise!) monkeys to get multiball action, but don't let it near the bullies or they'll deflate it. There's even a swordsman who'll cut it in half, so keep away.

THE EYES HAVE IT

THE OTHER SIX GAMES AREN'T HALF BAD EITHER...



>> BOOGIE DOWN

High-tech disco version of Simon Says – the character performs and you follow. Highly dodgy.



>> BOXING CHUMP

Take on the world's hardest mechanical monkey with a rain of punches. Check that chin out.



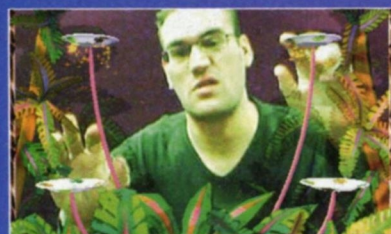
>> UFO JUGGLER

Spin the UFOs to keep them airborne, but make sure you destroy the evil spaceship. Yawn...



>> SLAP STREAM

You're God. Slap bad rats off of Heaven, but for pity's sake, spare the virtuous rabbits! Wibble.



>> PLATE SPINNER

Keep monkeys off the Delft as they invade your crockery-rotating antics. The least groovy game.



>> MIRROR TIME

It's easy to hit the targets – until your image has been flipped about endlessly. A bit of a head-f...



every one of them in these pages, and we strongly advise you to try them out when you get the chance.

EyeToy: Play quite obviously revels in its silliness like a prize saddleback in its own muck. At least 30% of the games feature monkeys in some form. Most of the time, you're nutting them, punching them or whacking them with a football. All sounds very Japanese, doesn't it? But it's actually been developed by Sony's team in the middle of London village. The same place the firm made *The Getaway*, in fact, although it's hard to imagine a more different game.

Each of the 12 mini-games has its own host, in the form of a quirky cartoon kid who'll give you help, congratulate you when you win and rip the piss out of you when you lose. It's odd to see Japanese-style mascots jumping around saying things like "Go on my son, 'ave it!" and "You got him right in the kisser!" Obviously not as odd as punching a monkey boxer or trying to catch tiny ghosts, but still not normal.

Each game works on a timer to ensure even expert players can't hog the console, although if you're rubbish you'll finish early. Just like busting moves on a dancemat, in other words. We weren't convinced by some of the games, but that's the nature of party titles – something for everyone. Plate spinning wasn't that much fun, even with the addition of (you guessed it) cheeky monkeys that shimmy up the poles and jump onto the plates, sending simian and crockery alike to freefall doom. It's more than made up for by the sheer wacky audacity of



some of the other challenges. Mind you, early rumours did suggest there'd be an air guitar sim, which looks not to have made it into the final game. Boo.

MY LITTLE EYE

The scope for cheating is pretty huge, because all *EyeToy* can really do is just sense whatever's moving on screen. Want some help washing those windows in *Wishi-Washi*? Walk across the screen to clear them. Don't want to head the football in *Keep-Ups*? Use your hands. It's hardly a problem, though. It's been designed by the developer as 'the ultimate party game'. If you're playing with friends, they'll catch you out. If you're playing on your own, who cares if you cheat or not?

Social gaming is on the way up, and *EyeToy*'s going to be a big part of it. Just to show how important inter-gamer communication is,

WISHI WASHI



The world's first window-cleaning sim, so it is. You simply move your hands to wipe the window, all to the sound of *When I'm Cleaning Windows* by George Formby. No kidding. For some reason, girls seem to enjoy this one more.

As you progress, you'll need to rub off those stubborn bird poo stains to make the windows really clean. Quick, someone tell Sony it's meant to be fun rather than hard work. What's next, dishwashing?

'TIS WITCHCRAFT!



How does EyeToy work? A tiny elf inside the camera shouts what he sees down the wire to the PlayStation2? Nah, it's no more than a standard USB camera, of the type used for PC webcams. That's why Sony can sell it with the *EyeToy: Play* title for little more than the price of a normal game. All the hard work is actually done by the PS2, comparing images many times a second to work out what's changed. Like T-Rex, EyeToy's visual acuity is based on movement. If you remain perfectly still, you won't react with anything on screen. Easy.



EyeToy: Play also includes the option to record short video messages, store them on memory cards, and give them to your EyeToy-enabled friends to watch. No, we can't think of any way of using it that's not obscene, either. To be honest it's pretty useless, but it demonstrates the breadth of EyeToy applications.

TOY STORIES

We're no motion sensor scientists, but we do have a few great ideas we'd like to see in EyeToy games. What if EyeToy could recognise an object (like, for example, a sword), which you could swing around? It would have to be a bright,

GHOST CATCHER



Find the floating ghosts and pinch them until they pop. It's made harder by the fact that they're almost completely transparent. The way they inch away from your creeping hands has to be seen. It's oddly sensual, in fact. Mmmm.

Keep going and you'll be assaulted by hordes of bats. Luckily, they're much easier to take care of than the ghosts, so a large swipe of the arm will do the trick. Spooky! Well, about as spooky as a warming cup of Bovril, but not without its charms.

ROCKET RUMBLE



A bit like the early PS2 puzzler *Fantavision*, *Rocket Rumble* has you highlighting fireworks of one colour and then exploding them with the detonators at the bottom of the screen. Sounds simple, no?

In fact, it's one of the toughest games – those fireworks are tiny, and you'll have to be very accurate to hit them. But the explosions are worth all the trouble. This one's low on adrenaline, but high on actual fun.



Hold your hand over the camera lens at any time



glowing sword, though. We could call it... hmmm... a 'lightsaber'. Survival horror needs this technology too. Imagine staring at your actual face in an in-game mirror, only to see it rot into a skull in front of your eyes! Nasty.

And what about the possibilities of web-cam style EyeToy games over the network adaptor? Or – or – what if your EyeToy could control some kind of vicious killer robot dog, trained to attack at the least sign of movement? Alright, we'll stop now. Too much caffeine. Taking a step back from the world of fantasy, the bottom line is that EyeToy won't redefine the gaming experience, take games to the next level, or immerse you in a new digital world. But it's fun, which is what games are all about. And think about it – how many PS2 titles have you played this year that have actually put a smile on your face?

/ JOFF BROWN

FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

A genuinely New Thing in the world, we reckon *EyeToy* will polarise opinion like most gadget-based games. Whether you think it's the world's lamest concept or you can't wait to start holding your first EyeToy party, we urge you to try it in the name of fun and science. After all, you have nothing to lose but every last shed of your dignity...

ROOM TO PLAY

PLAYROOM MODE IS FULL OF SPECIAL EFFECTS. SOME ARE ODD. SO ARE THE REST.



>> SPARKLES

Colourful magic rainbow dust falls from your every moving part. Like clown's dandruff.



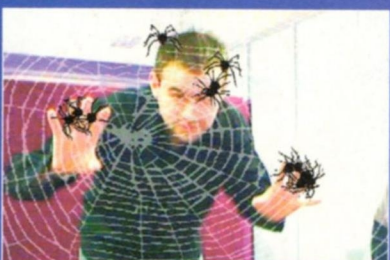
>> UNDERWATER

The screen goes all wibbly and you can chase small fish around. Jon's the Little Dur-maid.



>> LEAVES

A wave of the arm sends the autumn leaves fluttering through the air. Right party it were.



>> SPIDERS

The spiders cover your body. Can you shake 'em off? Lee screamed like a girl in seconds.



>> BEES

Help, I'm covered in bees! Moving will anger nature's scud missiles. Run, Rich, run!

PREVIEW

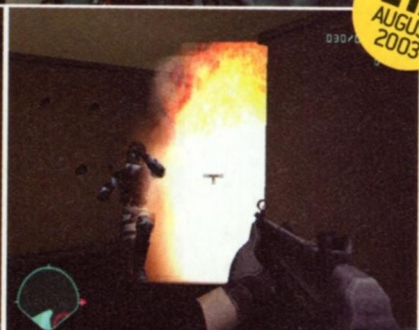
ICE NINE

DOUBLE THE ACTION, DOUBLE THE CROSSING AND A DOUBLE DOSE OF SPY-FILLED DECEPTION

ICE NINE™



NED KELLY! There's nothing like an Aussie dev team to throw us a few winky ones. What...? They're not kidding?



ETA
AUGUST
2003

FIREFIGHTER 2K4 Yeah, that's right. Kill the fire, you legend.

HE'S ON FIRE! It's getting hot in herre, so shoot up those barrels.

FOGTASTIC They call it 'atmospheric'. We call it Superman 64. Nice big chopper though.

TYPE	ACTION
PUBLISHER	BAM! / THO
GAME GLANCE	
/ Spy Action / Disguise System / Double Crosses	

BLACK ICE

Sneaking in behind waves of automatic weapon fire and under the cover of thrown grenades;

doing your best Axel Foley routine while dressed as a delivery boy; slipping a computer virus past physical defences... all are forms of infiltration. Infiltration, in all its glory, is what this game is all about.

Sure, there's all the usual action you associate with spy thrillers — the sneaking, shooting and stealing — but there's also the opportunity to become a double agent and infiltrate the very Central Intelligence Agency that hands you your pay slips.

Oh yes, there'll be double crosses and even a twisting plot; a movie by the name of *The Recruit* has a lot to do with this.

In that film our young hero, played by Colin Farrell, is recruited into the CIA by Al Pacino. From there it's anyone's guess who he's actually working for, whether his girlfriend is a double agent, whether he's a double agent, or if it's all

just the final test in Pacino's mind-numbingly tough spy training.

The gurus at game publisher BAM! saw the intriguing possibilities lurking in the script right off, but slowly their vision of the deceit and double-cross crystallised into something a little different. Something Ice-like. Using a crack bunch of Aussie developers as an extraction team, *Ice Nine* was smuggled from the pages of *The Recruit* and hasn't looked back.

NAME OF THE GAME

Since the game was taking a step away from *The Recruit* to do its own thing, it obviously needed a new name and with "First Person Infiltration" sounding positively rude, it was decided that the game would take its name from the computer virus that is the plot's central doodad.

Ice Nine, the virus, is top-of-the-line. It is so sophisticated that it can be transmitted through power lines and take out an entire city's electrical systems, and devices, in the process.

Thing start to get interesting when Ice Nine is

stolen from your home base much to your, and the CIA's, chagrin. As the game's designer Alex Hutchinson says, "It's all a bit James Bond, but it's good fun."

Hutchinson has had the challenge of writing a game that comes from the pages of *The Recruit* without being *The Recruit*, making it game-compatible and then spicing it up for a stand-alone product without big-name actors to help sell it.

Luckily, Hutchinson is not only a game designer but a published novelist and you can see this creep into the tale of deceit, moral ambiguity and betrayal.

While the central plot revolves around the main character's attempts to prevent the deployment of Ice Nine, there's a lot more going on than meets the eye.

"Tom Carter is our lead character and he is returning to the CIA after a previously botched training attempt where his trainer turned out to be a double agent and he had him working for the enemy," explains Hutchinson.

Directly after this experience Tom quits, as

FSW PROPHECY

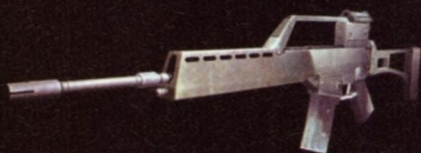
BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ Australiaan
- ▲ Disguises!
- ▲ No puncy Hollywood studios to screw up the plot

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ Espionage - yawn
- ▼ Australian
- ▼ Colin Farrell would have been oh so dreamy

G-36



GRENADE



HK-33



PREVIEW

ICE NINE



BOOGIE DOWN "Dance for the kiddies!" An accurate portrayal of Redfern's lunchtime entertainment.



you do, but he soon comes to realise he's just not cut out for "you want fries with that?" 400 times a day. Considering that's pretty much all he's qualified to do outside of the Company, he decides to go back and try to complete his training. Yet Tom must also handle emotional blackmail from certain factions relating to the truth surrounding his father's death – his old man was also 'Company man'.

Can you feel the workplace love already?

And thus, filled with suspicion, and distrusted by his colleges, Tom is thrust into the deadly world of terrorists, killer computer viruses, tripod mounted guns and wholesale spy action.

TURNING POINTS

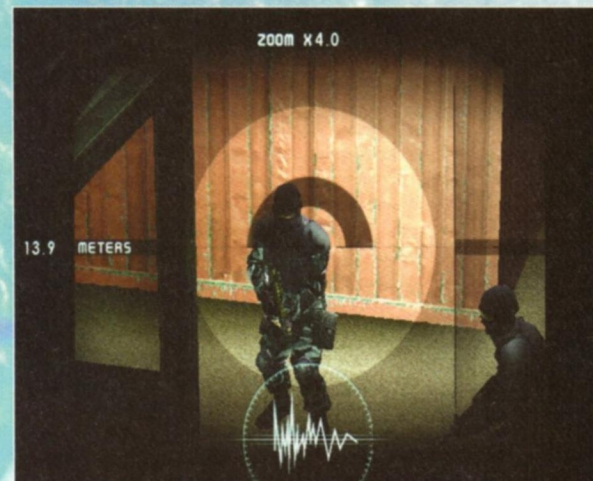
There's a good chance that he's not ready for it all, and that's just what the mysterious Zhang is hoping for. Zhang turns up in the weirdest of places and essentially becomes the little devil on Tom's shoulder, whispering dark things about the CIA and offering precious information about Tom's father in exchange for a couple of new objectives per mission. Will Tom stay true to the CIA which screwed him and his dad or will he do his own thing? Developer Torus is taking pains to lay on the shades of grey right up to the crucial turning point. Defend the American way or stick it to the man, both have some serious merits — just make sure you don't get caught.

SHADOWY GAMEPLAY

One of the main devices for stealth games has always been those areas where the light is a little dim and guards won't see you if you stay really still. The folks at Torus figured that its bad guys would have eaten a carrot or two in their life and would probably not be completely unable to notice a big guy in combat gear crouching in the corner of the secret HQ.



THE PSW KITCHEN It's all mould. Now where's that work experience kid when you need him?

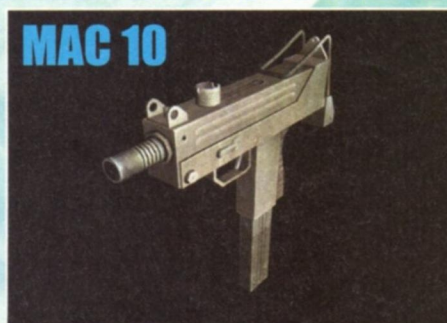


SNIPER RIFLES... The latest weapon in the war against heart disease.

HK-69



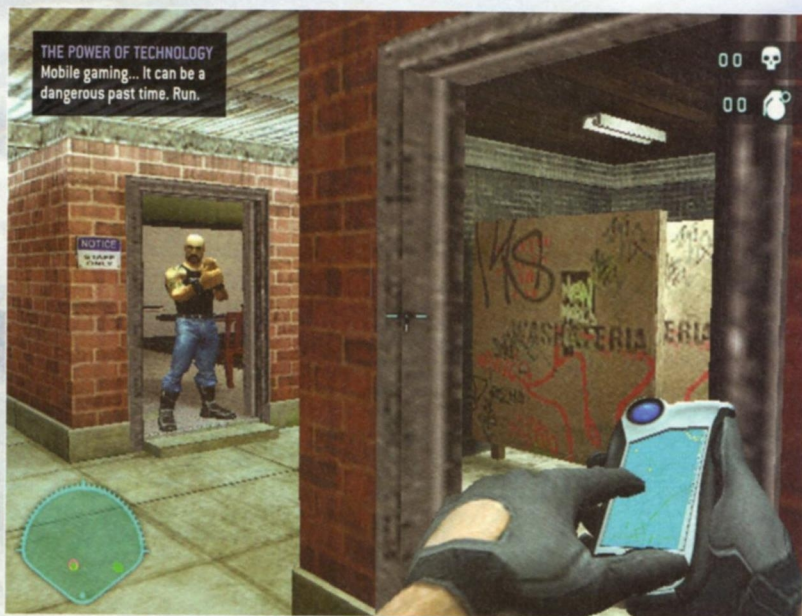
MAC 10



MINES



WEAPONS



And so, in Ice Nine players go under cover. Hutchinson says that when the game is complete somewhere in the ballpark of 90% of the characters you see will be available for mugging and clothes theft. The idea is that players can mingle with their foes and really immerse themselves in the environment. All will run smoothly until your mission

requires something naughty or you happen to give yourself away. Slips include: shooting people on the job, bumping into guards, wandering into restricted areas or having a stashed body discovered.

As I said before, infiltration is the name of the game, but maybe dressing up like a sissy scientist isn't quite your way... Well, that's okay too, as Hutchinson explains: "Disguises can give you access to previously locked areas or let you sneak past specific guards, but mostly we want it to feel like an option — you can complete most levels without them but you can play in a different style if you choose to grab disguises, use only silenced weapons and sneak around."

"It's an attempt to avoid linearity by providing a 'tool box' of skills, which the player can employ or ignore."

Besides the disguises, there will be some of the more standard stealth mechanics such as guards having certain view zones which you can see on your heads-up display and hence avoid. Naturally, distractions and silenced bullets can also help you slip past guard posts.

NO RECRUITMENT

THE GAME ABOUT A MOVIE...SORT OF!

It's a little odd to base a game on a movie and then shoot off in a new direction. BAM! however wasn't afraid to try it.

As a part of its agreement with Spyglass Studios it is allowed to not only make the game of the movie but just to use the themes and concepts from an optioned script.

Ice Nine started life as *The Recruit* game but soon BAM! got excited enough with what they were doing to throw off the shackles of a movie license and make the game stand on its own merits. Movie games have such a stigma anyway.



1-2-3 STEP, NOW MOONWALK And on the seven day, Tom shouted: "I said dance!"



NED KELLY 2: RANGE MORE BUSH Who needs a movie license? This shit is gold!



LOCKED EH...? Must be a secret door around here somewhere. I'll just ask Ned.

PREVIEW

ICE NINE

GUN PLAY

Being a sneaky action adventure game *Ice Nine* comparisons between *Metal Gear* and *Splinter Cell* are inevitable, but the crew at Torus are quick to point out one serious difference: perspective. *Ice Nine* is first-person all the way.

"The first-person aspect of the game is definitely trying to find a balance between the stealth that they [*Splinter Cell* and *Metal Gear*] use in that mode as well as introducing a lot more fire fights than they have," says Hutchinson.

So, although the game is generally geared to let the player choose how to approach it, Torus have also made sure that there are places where you just need to throw away the Groucho Marx 'tache and cause some mayhem.

To do this Tom initially carries a 9mm pistol - but he is more than happy to swap this for any better toys that his fallen foes happen to have. Can you say sniper rifles, machine guns, assault rifles, mounted defence weapons, hand-to-hand attacks and grenades? Torus has made a point in cutting inventory fiddling to a minimum, so the grenades and mines are always just a shoulder button away.

Tom can carry two weapons at a time plus his handy PDA, which is pretty deadly in its own right. This thing fires poisoned pellets, camera disabling darts and distraction pellets not to mention having the more usual communication properties. Palm take note.

HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENTS

The spy game is a dangerous one and Tom will need all the weapons, smarts and handheld computers he can lay a hand on to make it through *Ice Nine*'s 12 levels.

Hutchinson claims that each and every one has as many objectives as Torus could cram in, so there should be plenty to do. Yet not only do you have the mission critical objectives, you also have optional double agent tasks.

The levels range from the heartily realistic like Camp Peary (the notorious CIA training ground known as 'the farm') to secret underground complexes with distinct Sean Connery vintage Bond overtones.

Each is obviously themed for the more memorable moments, like one level's tribute to

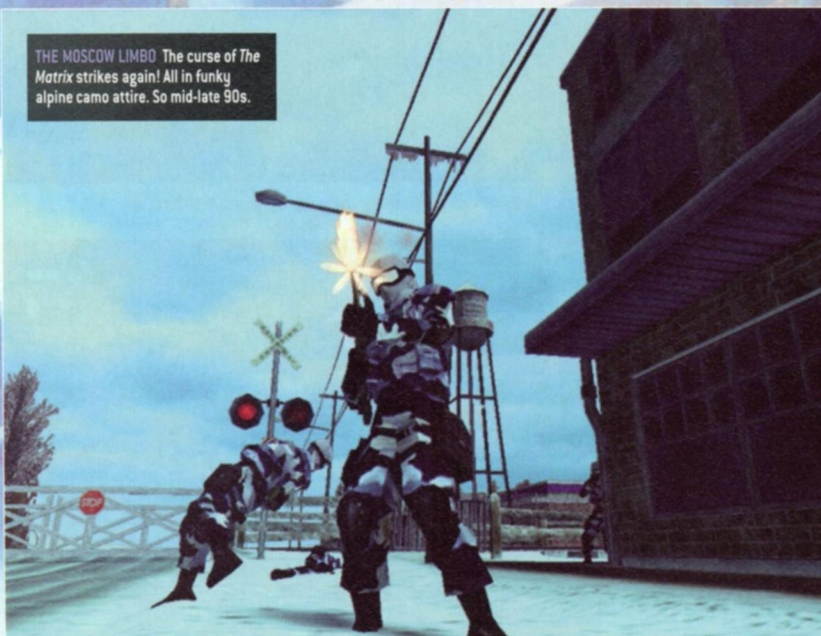
trench warfare or another's gas chamber about which you really don't want to make any historically sensitive jokes.

The whole feel of the game is geared towards keeping things realistic while leaving enough room for some fun. The settings and dialogue

TORUS, THE OBVIOUS CHOICE

THIS MISSION IF YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT...

LET'S JUST SAY YOU RUN A GAMES PUBLISHER IN THE US AND YOU'VE landed the license to make a game based on an Al Pacino and Colin Farrell spy movie. What do you do? For BAM! the answer was simple: you go to an Australian developer best known for games such *Squatter*, *Dick Johnson's V8 Challenge*, *Carnageddon TDR 2000* and, more recently, Game Boy adaptations of *Doom* and *Minority Report* (err... - Ed). As it happened, Torus happened to have infiltrated BAM! using two agents with who they had conspired before, one from Acclaim and one from Mattel. These two suggested the Melbourne-based studio and then Torus managed to impress the suits at BAM! with the high-end engine and water effects it had developed for Tao Berman's *Extreme Kayaking*. Come on Torus, show us what you've got.



NETBANKING CONVENIENCE As good a time as any to start.



INFILTRATE! The secret hi-tech generic HQ textures give it away.



ROBOCOP RETURNS The life of the colour blind secret agent. Or it could be our capture card...

PISTOL



QBZ-95



SHOTGUN



WEAPONS

are urban and gritty and there aren't any enemies like Oddjob throwing a hat or Moonraker space installations; "we're trying to suspend disbelief, not hang it," Hutchinson quips.

Along those lines, a lot of work is going into making the levels really hum without resorting to lava pools or killer robots. Torus is pouring attention into moody weather effects like driving rain and plummeting snow, artistic abuse of atmospheric lighting, characters who go about day-to-day business as you walk incognito through their world and, finally, an advanced physics system.

If you throw a grenade into a warehouse room you'll see boxes, empty cans, weapons and bodies fly and bounce off the walls then clatter along the floor. If you reload the game and do it again you'll see that the scatter patterns are unique each time. The physic system also includes a rag-doll effect which gives bodies a real sense of weight so that dead guards will fall down stairs, topple off roofs and slump over computers in a satisfying manner.

GUARD DUTY

Naturally, use of grenades won't just show you pretty physics, it will also attract attention. Hutchinson says that that AI is coming along very nicely and you already see some pretty interesting behaviour. Guards will already run between cover, reload, retreat and check their fallen comrades. When the squad-based AI is finished they will also check how their buddies are doing and assess whether to push forward, take cover or pull back.

The henchmen lending muscle to these manoeuvres will include standard thugs, guards protected by riot shields, police close-combat specialists, sergeants who hang back and call in reinforcements as well as the odd sniper.

Simply, Torus are promising variation on the classic themes to match the levels and to keep you hopping.

Talking about hopping, *Ice Nine* features visible location damage so that you can bring down riot cops by shooting them in the legs or go for quick-kill head shots. You could hear the dislike rise in Hutchinson's voice as he talked about other games where a barrage of shots into an oncoming enemy's leg doesn't slow them an iota. Expect a system a little quicker, nastier and one which encourages being infinitely more deliberate.

Fortunately, Tom isn't alone in the midst of all of this danger. An agent named Hanna has his back. In some

missions she's just feeding him information, while in others she is right there beside him.

It's a pity that Hanna actively dislikes Tom.

Apparently he accidentally killed a fellow agent the first time around as a part of that whole working for a double agent thing. Baby, get over it already.

I SPY

With all of the twists and distrust Tom really has his work cut out for him, but he's not the only one.

With *Ice Nine*, Torus is being thrust into the major league with the aforementioned big hitters *Metal Gear Solid 2* and *Splinter Cell* being the two games that are bound to be brought out for benchmarking purposes.

So far, the combination of human drama, CIA objectives and the opportunity to dress up in funny clothing

seems to be coming together into something pretty intriguing, not to mention quite distinct from *Solid* or *Cell*.

With its origins in a film script and a plot revolving around the lure of the dark side, it's not surprising that *Ice Nine* is turning heavily cinematic [...that word again!] and while the story that unfolds is actually pretty straightforward, Torus is hell-bent on making sure the choices are not.

At this stage it's looking pretty sharp but we'll have to wait until August to see if Torus can infiltrate the big league.

/ TIM C. BEST

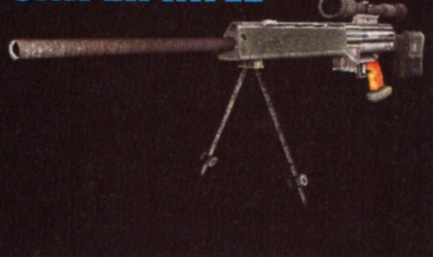
FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

While we have seen an overabundance of the covert op/espionage/stealth variety of game in the last few years, developers Torus seem to be spicing up the mix sufficiently, with disguises, an involving plot and the flexibility of first-person perspective. Could this be the big breakout game for Aussie game development?



WEAPONS



T-154



RPG







THE HULK

SOMEONE'S BEEN EATING THEIR BROCCOLI. AND WE'RE NOT
TALKING ABOUT HIGH-POWERED FART PRODUCTION EITHER.

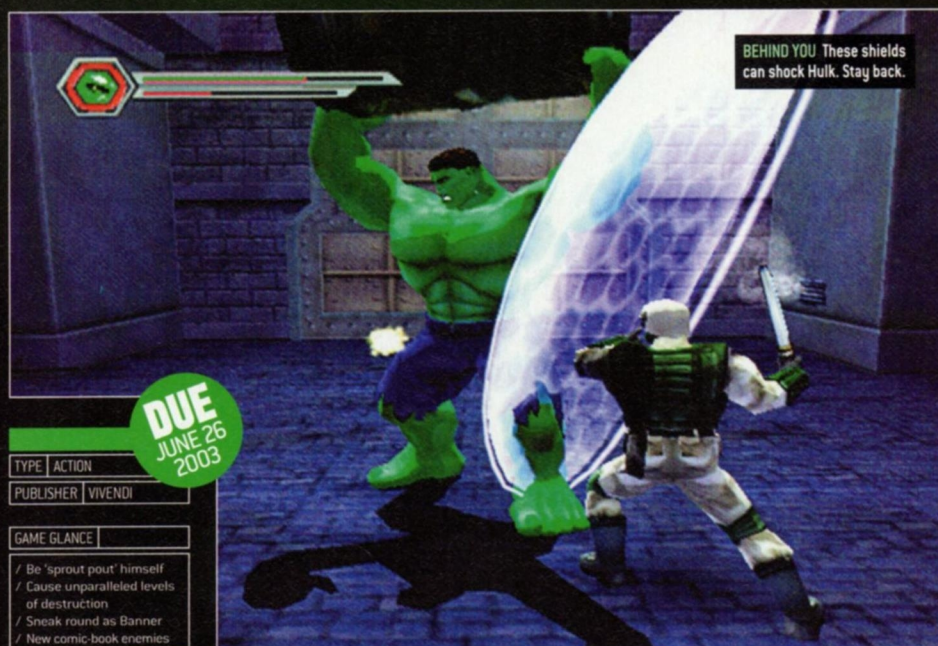
WORDS / JOFF BROWN



MONSTER FIGHT Crazy supervillains abound.



"HELLO KIND SIR How are today?" "Fine. Yourself?"



BEHIND YOU These shields can shock Hulk. Stay back.

DUE
JUNE 26
2003

TYPE ACTION

PUBLISHER VIVENDI

GAME GLANCE

- / Be 'sprout pout' himself
- / Cause unparalleled levels of destruction
- / Sneak round as Banner
- / New comic-book enemies



TON OF BRICKS Later, his mates called him Mr Pancake behind his back.

"IT'S NOT JUST A HANDFUL OF OBJECTS YOU CAN PICK UP. NINE TIMES OUT OF TEN, IF YOU CAN SEE IT, YOU CAN WRENCH IT APART AND HIT SOMEONE WITH IT"

EVER GOT MAD? WE MEAN REALLY, REALLY

mad? Shaking with tearful rage, throbbing, when everything takes on a dull shade of red? So insane you felt like the anger was something else, some kind of force from hell, ready to rip you apart? Well, that's nothing. Not compared to the sheer world-crushing fury of the Hulk.

Lets talk geek comic-book comparisons for a second. In terms of sheer strength, he makes Spider-Man look like Billy Elliot. Compared to him, Wolverine's no more than a rat. Daredevil can go trick or treating. The Hulk is, quite simply, "Earth's Mightiest Mortal".

When you think about it, that's not such a great claim. Most superheroes are either from somewhere other than earth or immortal. But you still wouldn't want him throwing a tank in your face, would you? And when we heard about the upcoming movie, we knew a game couldn't be far behind. We wanted answers. In fact, we wanted more than answers. We wanted to be sold this project; like rednecks being sold cheap cotton candy at a county fair sideshow. So who better to question than... the Hulk himself! Only joking of course. The Hulk's not real, is he now? Tsk. Keep up. In fact, we questioned Hulk game producer Jeff Barnett all about the title.

We've seen some fantastic trailers for the film, so one of the first things we wanted to know was just how close the game will stick to it. The answers were a little surprising. "The game story is an extension of the film story (we pick up about a year after the events of the film), and stays true to the themes and mythology that are explored in the film. By working closely with the

filmmakers, we were able to make the game a part of one big Hulk experience that doesn't end in the theatre. The game story even includes specific elements from the Hulk comic universe as well." This is interesting. Essentially, it's an all-new plot, then. You won't recreate any scenes from the movie? Hmm.

This may lead the more cynical among you to mutter, "Okay, so without the movie, he's just a giant green man. How much fun can this be?" Shame on you. Barnett told us what makes the Hulk special: "World destruction, over-the-top attacks, and heavy object interaction is what really sets Hulk apart from every other super hero." "Heavy object interaction?" we asked. Not exactly a normal superhero trait, is it? "In Hulk, you face off against tanks and can punch the tanks' shells right



TANKS A MILLION There's a whole army of tanks to fight in this section.

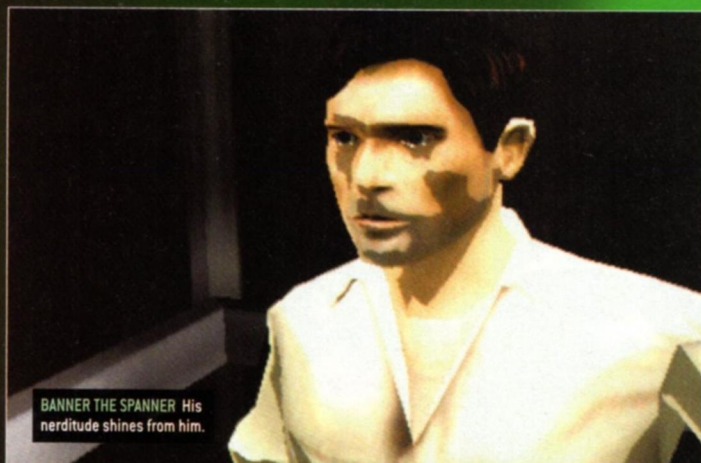
back at them. You can pick up, swing and damage just about anything you can see in this game."

He's not lying either. It's not just a handful of objects than can be picked up. Nine times out of ten, if you see it, you can wrench it apart and use it to hit someone with. Even the walls and floor take damage. Jump in the air, and when you land you'll leave a hole of shattered concrete in your wake. Punch the wall, and the same thing happens. Targeting was a touch erratic when we tried it, but we're sure it will be sorted for the game's release. As well as highlighting enemies, you can aim for the nearest weapon. And sometimes to the Hulk, of course, weapons and enemies are the same thing...

DONALD DUCK

So we know he's strong, but what else can the Hulk do apart from being able to demolish everything in sight? "Demolishing everything in sight pretty well sums it up. Once you transform into the most powerful creature in the world, it's just a matter of how you use the power. Do you pick soldiers up and throw them off rooftops or do you hold them up in one hand and beat them senseless with the other? Do you pick up cars and throw them at helicopters or do you use the car as a club and start swinging at your enemies?"

The answer to this long rhetorical question is: oh boy yes, yes, yes and oh yeah. It took a long, long time before we got bored of throwing soldiers off the top of tower blocks, in fact. We're talking several hours. It's just not something you get to do in games. Only rarely do you get to carry enemies round like rag dolls or use



BANNER THE SPANNER His nerditude shines from him.



PUT HIM DOWN Or I'll... erm... call yer mum fat.



DAYLIGHT LOBBERY Slight case of overkill here, eh?

them as weapons. But what we actually meant was, what sort of moves does he have?

Barnett filled us in: "We created a very dynamic set of moves that lets players decide how to smash the world or destroy their enemies in whatever way they see fit. As players look around in this game, they are going to be seeing big objects and saying: 'Hey, I can rip that off the wall and use it as a baseball bat!' All this, of course, comes along with many classic Hulk moves that the players will be expecting after reading the comics or seeing the film, such as the Sonic Clap and Gamma Stomp. Finally, if players get the Hulk angry enough through attacks, they'll get put into a Rage mode that gives them access to show-stopping attacks."

Ah, yes. Rage mode. When the Hulk gets really, really

mad – even madder than the normal background levels of choking rage that consume his very being – he'll enter Rage mode and all his attributes become powered up. Green gamma flames flicker round his body. To enter rage mode, you can pick up red icons that occasionally appear after you kill an enemy. But the Hulk will, quite naturally, become enraged at being hurt, so even if you're doing badly you're more likely to trigger it off. It's an anger-pocalypse of lethal destruction. It's wicked.

BASIL FAWLTY

About a third of the game involves no smashing, roaring or general destruction. Which is why we haven't mentioned it yet. Yes, you'll play as Bruce Banner for several of the 25 missions. Bruce is a scientist. He's not extra-strong, or lime-coloured. He's just good with molecules. Figuring that a degree-level biology sim might prove a little dull, the developer has given Bruce the chance to sneak around various government institutions, seeking the cure to his trauma and various items that will stop the super-villains on the rampage. This comes down to a lot of stealth gameplay, with fights being avoided where at all possible. At the moment, these sections aren't quite as fun to play. Are you surprised? It's just a shame that you can't choose when to Hulk out and deal out some jade justice.

Mind you, it would kind of defeat the object of the whole thing if you could transform when you like, turning the Hulk into no more than a power-up. 'The Incredibly Useful Hulk' just doesn't sound as cool. "Players don't choose when to transform at will,"



READY FOR MY CLOSE UP He's a shy fella, but we caught him on camera.

UH... HULK MADE BOO BOO

THE HULK'S BEEN IN COMICS FOR 40 YEARS. THAT'S A LOT OF TIME FOR A BIG, CLUMSY, STUPID GREEN MAN TO MAKE MISTAKES. FOR YOUR CRUEL AMUSEMENT, WE PRESENT THE HIGHLIGHTS.



WHOOPS! >> Hulk is sent into space until he's sorry. The Grey Hulk, a reasoning but nastier incarnation of the monster, is released by some kind of pseudo-science space-radiation thing.



D'OH! >> Buddy Doc Samson tries to treat Banner's personality disorder. He not only ends up with Hulk-like powers but tries to pull Banner's girl Betty Ross instead. What a cad.



ERR... >> When the Hulk travels to the future, he meets an aged version of himself called the Maestro. Who proceeds to pummel him into the ground. That's just sad.



DAMMIT! >> Just before he can marry Betty Ross at last, Banner's nemesis the Leader blasts him with gamma rays and turns him into the Hulk. Wedding cake all over the shop.



OH NO... >> Hulk is hit on by Jarella, green and buxom queen of the planet K'ai. Hulk's too stupid to see what he's got and returns to earth. Scared of strong women are you, Hulk?



I'M JUST SO SORRY >> Superman shows up. Technically, the Hulk's stronger. Yet the man in the pant-cape combination kicks seven shades out of ol' greenskin. Sigh.



CROSS AT THE GREEN MAN
No-one likes Hulk. Sob.



“JUST WHEN YOU THINK YOU’RE WATCHING A FLAT- FEELING SCENE YOU’LL PICK UP A TRUCK AND SEND A BUNCH OF SOLDIERS REELING INTO EACH OTHER”

explains Barnett. “In fact, when playing the game as Banner, players are always trying to suppress their rage by avoiding attacks because a transformation into the Hulk will usually jeopardise their objective. However, Banner will eventually get into key spots after accomplishing objectives that allow the Hulk to be unleashed.” That last bit translates as: “You will begin a Hulk level at the same point at which you’ve finished a Banner one.”

MRT

Now, this Hulk doesn’t quite look like the monster in the film. The movie Hulk has more of a thinner, human face, reflecting the tortured man within. Not our videogame monster, oh no. This one has a jaw like a forklift and



FEAR ME He is mighty. He is strong. We call him Mr Shouty. He hates it.

teeth like tombstones. His complexion’s more luminous than the sinister dull green of the films. He’s not just another iteration of the comic-book Hulk, either – he’s too unique for that. He’s a video game Hulk and no mistake. He’s ours. And it’s not just Jade Jaws that’s different – it’s the whole visual style of the game.

In a brave move, the developer has decided to give the entire game a look that’s all their own. We have to admit we were expecting something a little more unadventurous, say like *Spider-Man*. Great-looking, but hardly pushing the envelope. Instead, we get characters drawn with large swathes of single colours. When shadows fall onto the Hulk – which they do a lot, because the light effects are strikingly done – it’s a cartoon noir effect like something from the recent *Batman* ‘toons’. See if you can spot this effect in the screen shots. The end result is a stylised look, although not – thank the Lord – exactly cel-shaded.

From far away to mid-range, it looks pretty stunning. The only times it can jar are during extreme close-ups, when everything seems just a little bit too basic-looking. But just when you think you’re watching an uncomplicated, flat-feeling scene, you’ll pick up a forklift truck and send a bunch of soldiers reeling into each other, as the trucks smashes into the ground. And you’ll realise there’s more to realism than just looking right. In this case, it has a lot to do with feeling right, too. As we’ve argued in these pages recently, it’s no sin to go off on your own if you’re game-erising a movie. We’ve generally found that the less like the film a game is prepared to be, the better it is. Otherwise it’s touchy-

HULK ATTACK

WHEN HE’S NOT THROWING THINGS, HULK HAS A FEW TRICKS UP HIS SLEEVE... PANTS... WHATEVER.



POWER STRIKE >> Hold down the attack button, and you’ll power up Hulk with a devastating rush attack. Your defences are vulnerable while you collect your strength, so use it carefully.



SONIC CLAP >> ‘Tha H’ can slap his hands together to create a Sonic Clap, a limited range projectile attack. Those it doesn’t knock over will be stunned by the noise, allowing you to close in.



JUMPING WALLOP >> Um, this may well be what the above move’s called. Jump up high. Power up frozen in mid-air, then descend in a mighty punch that shakes the ground. Very nice indeed.



GAMMA STOMP >> Hulk can pound the ground, creating a gamma wave which knocks out all enemies nearby. That is if the overwhelming stench of an excited green giant doesn’t do it first.



GREEN VS MACHINE Punch hard and even tanks crack.



THAT'S GOTTA HURT A hit to the green gonads. Owwee!



MINE'S A HALF Half-Life is an energy vampire. He really sucks.



FIST OF PAIN The Hulk's cavity search really stung.



GAMMA SLAMMER Two villains give Hulk gyp.

feely, exposition-filled cut scenes all the way. Keep 'em. We want emotion in our games, sure, but through playing, not through watching substandard computer-generated images.

Really, though, the unique thing about the Hulk isn't so much is strength or his size, or even his grass-type hue. It's the fact that he's simultaneously a hero and a villain. Although he's sullen and childlike by nature rather than actively evil, he's not exactly one of your do-gooder train-wreck-saving superhero types. He's more of a train-wreck causing fella, to tell the truth. He's also largely misunderstood.

YOSEMITE SAM

Which is why we're liking the game, actually. You see, its emotional dynamic matches that of the comic-book and, hopefully, the film: you're always being attacked, so you always fight back in a frenzy. You never get a chance to explain yourself, sit down and talk it out, or do anything but run or ruck. Quite unlike so many other games which present you with multiple enemies, there's something different at work here: the whole world is against you. You never have the opportunity to reach any safe havens, nobody fights on your side, you never get a breather. Every second you're the Hulk, you're fighting for your life. In fact, you'll start to fear that everybody's ganging up on you, trying to exterminate you. That's because they are.

You'll feel some of that impotent rage that drives the Hulk. He might be incredibly strong, and he's amazingly fast when he gets some speed going, but what he's

definitely not is agile. Try to pick up a soldier from too far away, and he'll scuttle back a little. Raise a giant concrete siding above your head for a bit of smashing, and don't be surprised if everyone's run away when you bring it down. It's not that you're slow, mind. You're just... unwieldy.

Killing more enemies will result in some meagre health pickups, but here's the problem: they never stop coming. No matter where you are, how many you've killed, how near you are to your goal, wave after wave of soldiers will relentlessly charge at you. At first they're little more than an irritant, but as you progress through the game and more and more enemies appear, all wielding ever-powerful weaponry, you'll start to feel the sting. Even the mighty Hulk can't take a minigun firing



GUESS WHICH HAND HULK HAS SOLDIER IN "That one." "D'oh! Hulk dumb."

into his face for long. Sure, it feels like ages before you actually die, but it will kill you eventually. It's a good thing there's so many closed doors to smash your way through, offering satisfying static targets. In a world where everything you do causes damage, you might as well enjoy it.

Of course, a Hulk's only ever as good as the environments he stomps through, so we were anxious to find out more about the game's various stages and the type of backgrounds we can expect. "The story mode will take you over parched deserts, into highly protected labs, across the rooftops of San Francisco, into the depths of Alcatraz, through a high tech military base and into the Freehold," game producer Jeff Barnett told us. "There is even an area where the player must backtrack as Banner across an area they previously destroyed as Hulk."

Don't expect to be able to stomp all over soldiers on your way either. Joining in the melee are other, gamma-enhanced enemies set to make your life a living hell. You may have heard of the Hulk hounds: giant, steroidal dogs with super strength. You'll meet gamma soldiers created by the Leader, Hulk's mekon-like adversary. And then there are the supervillains. Madman you might know from the comic book: another super-strong humanoid. Half-Life is an energy vampire, meaning that he drains strength through contact. How the hell are you supposed to kill a creature that can't be touched? We'll let you figure it out for yourself. And then there's Ravage, a creature with Hulk-like powers, and even the freakishly powerful Leader. In boss battles, you'll



CRATE SHOT Hit the choppers and they're sure to explode.



STAY STILL Soldiers don't hang around to be hit.



SPOT THE HULK On a tank? Easy. In a vat of pea soup? Surprisingly tough.

I'VE GOT A PhD IN SMASHOLOGY

APPARENTLY, ALL THIS DESTRUCTION IS JUST REALLY HARD MATHS IN DISGUISE

"ONE OF OUR BIGGEST GOALS WITH THIS GAME was to make the player really feel like the Hulk," Producer Jeff Barnett told us. [If we had a shining sixpence for every time we've heard this sort of phrase, we'd have some kind of shining sixpence mountain.] "It's not just enough to tell the player, 'You are the Hulk. Now have fun.' We needed to create abilities, powers and strengths that the Hulk really has. To accomplish this, we have created a simulated physics system and a fully interactive world that allows objects and enemies to interact in different ways when they smash into one another." Everything moves and reacts just like real materials, thanks to some really, really, complex physics equations. There's also quite a few foes on screen. When you bust up a whole room, you can almost feel the PS2 straining to work it all out.



FRANKENGIRDER Lay about you with anything.

actually have to think a bit rather than just smashing everything. Moves that you've never needed to use become essential, and the Hulk's limited agility is much more important too. Think 'irresistible force' versus 'immovable object'. You'll see how green skin bruises, believe us.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE

We suggested, casually, that it might be a good idea to use the actors from the film to do the voices in the game. Turns out they were way ahead of us. "Eric Bana did the VO [voice-over] for Bruce Banner. He did this performance while still doing the film so he was completely in character and used the exact same voice he used in the movie. Eric did a phenomenal job and his voice sounds great in the game." To this we can attest.



WRESTLE MANIA There should be a wrestler called Hulk. What? Oh.

It's the sound of a tortured soul, to be short.

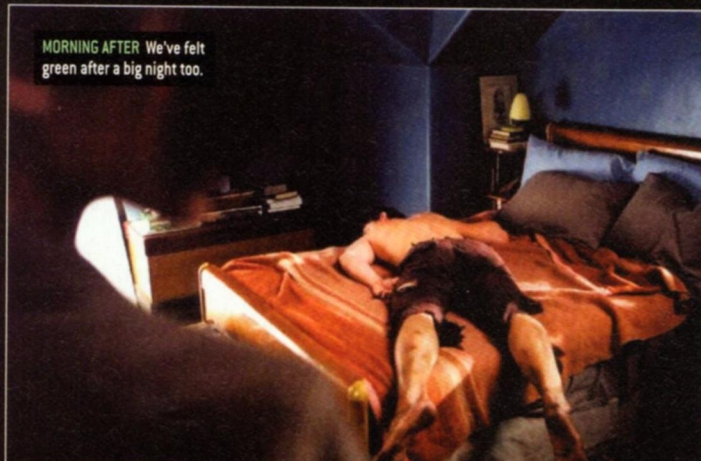
We don't want to give too much away, but it looks like it'll be well worth replaying the game for access to a host of bonus materials too. As well as a 'featurette' on the making of the game and the film, there's exclusive behind-the-scenes images from the movie. Oh, and more than a few gameplay bonuses too. The most intriguing option was to play as the Grey Hulk. If you don't know, the Grey Hulk is another aspect of Banner's considerably messed up personality. He's cleverer than the normal green Hulk, but he's also a lot more nasty... whether this will just be a different 'skin' for the main character or a whole new plotline, we don't know. The big scary men developer men dragged us away from the game before we could find out. That made us a bit angry... and you know what happens when we get angry? We cry.

FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

They've really captured essence of Hulk here, and we're not talking about green sweat. Playing this you'll feel empowered, brutish and paranoid all at once. Men will fear you, women will... also fear you. Whether this appeals to you is a different matter, but if you've always dreamed of living in a balsa-wood universe, you have to give it a try. The only aspect we're not convinced by is the Bruce Banner stealth missions. But even they're a nice break from the frenetic destruction. So Hulk good. HULK GOOD! We'll tell you just how good in our upcoming review.

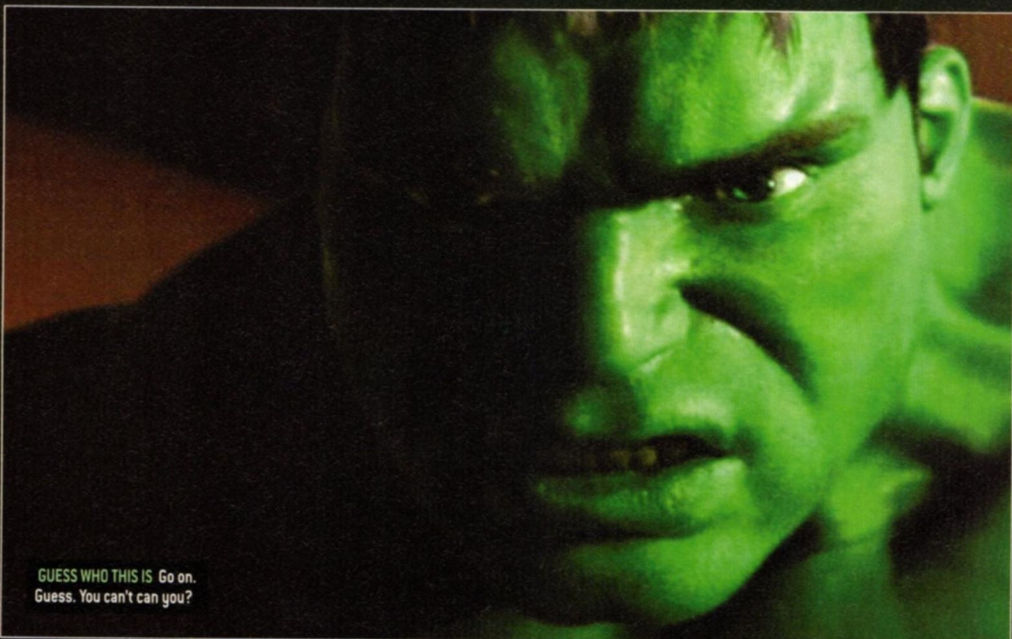
MORNING AFTER We've felt green after a big night too.



HEAVY LIFTER Hulk vs. Death Star? Maybe not.



GUESS WHO THIS IS Go on. Guess. You can't can you?



GAMMA SCREENING

"YOU WOULDN'T LIKE ME WHEN I'M ANG LEE." YES WE WOULD, IN FACT. EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE UPCOMING MOVIE IS HERE.

WHEN THE FIRST RUMOURS FLOATED AROUND that Chinese arthouse director Ang Lee was going to take the helm of a Hulk movie, the world was afflicted with universal jaw-drop. After all, he was last seen directing *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, a martial arts epic in which small girls jumped around bamboo forests in ancient China. Before that, there was *The Ice Storm*, a dissection of social mores in 70s America. Before that, a Jane Austen adaptation... need we continue?

Taking on the world's least graceful superhero didn't sound like the most obvious career choice. But it looks like Lee's come through in style. Word is, the Hulk movie won't just be this summer's biggest blockbuster. It'll also set heads a-scratching and hearts a-thunder with its combination of action, drama and intelligent suspense. But mainly tanks. Tanks flying through the air, propelled by the emerald muscles of you-know-who. Tanks smashing into other tanks, with a satisfying tanky-explody sound. Oh yeah.

Spookily, the actor playing Banner is our own Eric Bana, recently seen in the war flick *Black Hawk Down*. The Oscar-winning *A Beautiful Mind* actress Jennifer Connelly plays scientist heartthrob Betty Ross. We know

her better as the heroine of the 80s orcsplotation flick *Labyrinth*. Where's Hoggle these days, eh? They always forget the little ones when they get famous.

Expect buckets of psycho-drama as we get into the head of Bruce Banner, the heroic scientist with the repressed psyche that's unleashed when a burst of gamma rays turns him into the Hulk. Producer Gale Ann Hurd has stated: "We've updated it for the new millennium, but we've kept very true to the comic books, rather than to the television show." This can't be a bad thing. In the 70s *Hulk* telly programme, there was approximately half an hour of brooding, 15 minutes of suspense and five minutes of a fat green wrestler in a Tina Turner wig. Not good at all. They even messed up Hulk continuity by changing the good doctor's name to David Banner, for no reason at all. It's the name of Bruce's father in the film, played by Nick Nolte. Mind you, he's got some secrets of his own that he's not all that eager to reveal.

Perhaps the most important change is that the Hulk will be almost entirely computer generated, allowing for unprecedented realism. Today's top rumour is that the Hulk will actually grow bigger the madder he gets. We'll

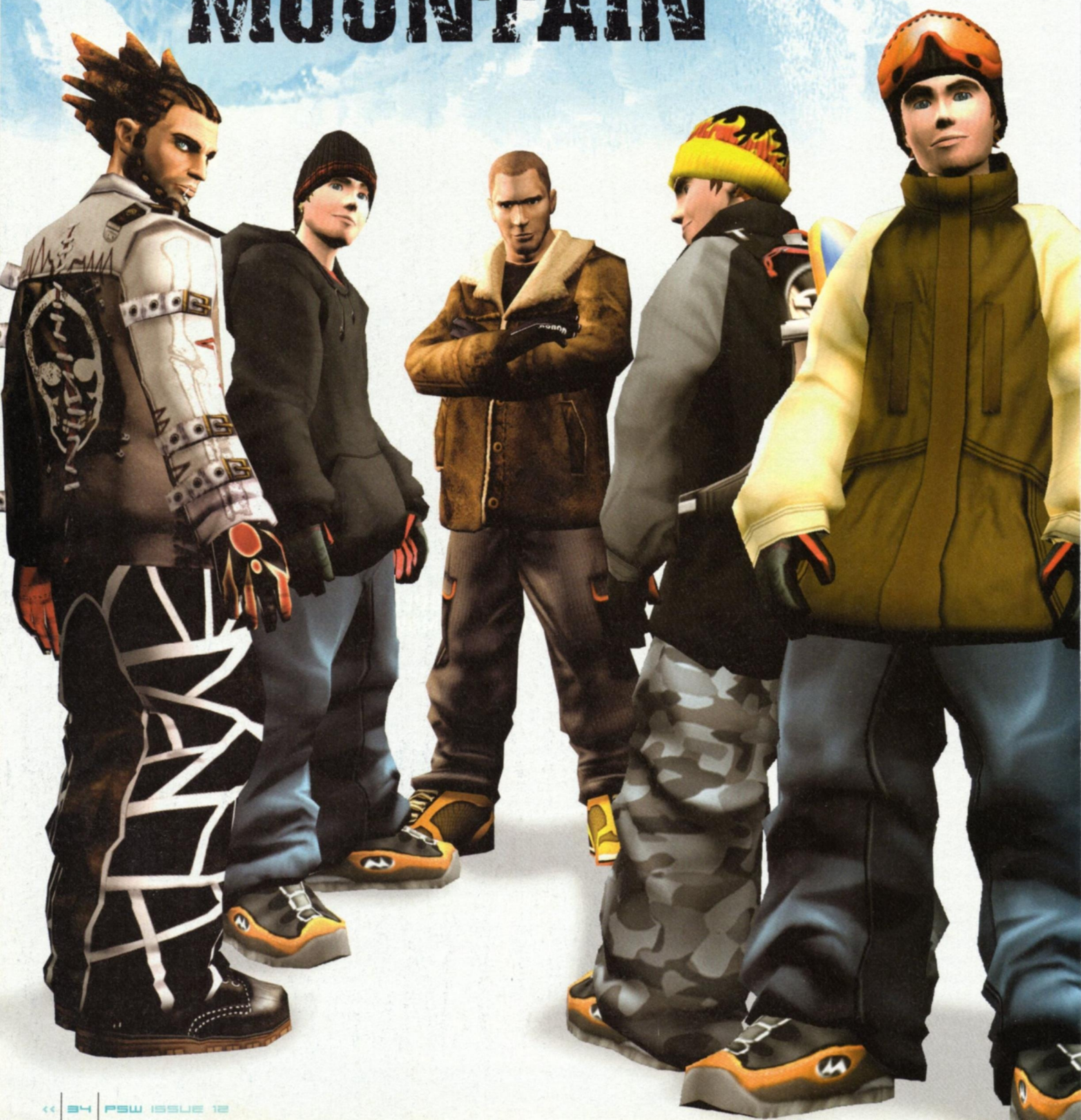
believe it when we see it. But it won't just be Big Bruce who's made out of polygons. As well as super-enemies, there's the already-infamous Hulk dogs. They're hounds in Banner's gamma ray experiments that have been bulked up to many times dog-size. Although the Hulk dogs reportedly don't have a huge part in the finished film, they show that we can't predict what Ang Lee is going to throw at us. Especially when you consider the words Lee uses to describe the Hulk: apparently he's a "very sad monster". So don't expect a simple tale of violence. It's a simple tale of violence... and tears. Aah.

Us gamers do have one advantage over the rest of the herd. Because the game takes place a year after events of the film, we know there's one thing we won't be seeing at the end of the movie. The Hulk won't die. So when that inevitable tear-jerking scene happens in the film, when Betty sobs over the prone Hulk and some soldier intones a ponderous speech about how "the real monster... was us", don't sob. Just hold on for the moment when the Hulk wakes up, winks one giant green eye at the camera, grabs him by the throat and throws him into a wall. Now that's drama.

PREVIEW

SSX3: OUT OF BOUNDS

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN



SSX3

OUT OF BOUNDS

ETA
LATE
2003

SIX FULL PAGES ON SSX3 AND NOT A SINGLE PUN BASED AROUND THE WORD 'PISTE'. NOW THAT'S SOME QUALITY JOURNALISM.

TYPE | SPORTS
PUBLISHER | EA

GAME GLANCE
/ Ride the whole mountain
/ Four all-new characters
/ Behold the Super Uber

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE
One bloody big hill
More tricks, bigger tricks
It won't hurt you

WORST BECAUSE
It's not out for months
Which is ages away
And we're bored

WE INVENTED SNOWBOARDING.

Not us personally granted, we're talking as in 'We, the video games industry'. We invented it because it perfectly suited our needs. Speed, glamour, danger, excitement, girls, boys, music, fireworks, jumps, falls, spinal injuries, spins, twists, twirls, sunglasses and pretty snow – it was a sport carefully synthesised under strict lab conditions to gently probe all our major erogenous zones. And then, in the late 1990s, as we collectively turned our backs for just a second to fix ourselves another Chicken Maggi Noodle, a band of ageing media types with thinning hair and even thinner girlfriends hijacked our bandwagon and drove it all the way to the Alps, where they proceeded to actually do what we'd spent so long play-acting at.

Having observed this sorry state of affairs for a number of years now, PSW finally feels the

time is right for gamers to reclaim snowboarding, to grab it back with both hands from the 39-year-old coke-snorters currently filling alpine lodges world-wide with asymmetrical haircuts and faux-Celtic tattoos. What they fail to understand is that this isn't a sport that you're physically supposed to do. Not only is it dangerous, it's also expensive and exhausting. No, it's something you only *claim* to actually do, like cleaning 'under the hood' once a day and donating money to help the starving children in Africa. But you never actually participate. That's, like, the entire point. Duh-brain. Which is why we're demanding that snowboarding be returned immediately in full working order. Thankfully for us, *SSX3: Out of Bounds* is the older cousin who used to be in the Territorial Army that we're phoning to help us out.

SSX IS NATURAL, SSX IS FUN

We know can rely on *SSX3* because we go way back. We've got previous. A special relationship. History. You see *SSX* was the game we turned to on the launch day of the PlayStation2 when, sick and tired of playing *TimeSplitters* with friends,

we sought a sedative in software form to help ease our post-hype comedown. *SSX* was the game we showed to our friends and parents when they wanted to know why exactly it was that we'd spunked away a doorstep-slither of our wages on a black plastic thing that looked to the untrained eye like a cut-price Hungarian burglar alarm. And *SSX Tricky*, the remixed-special-edition-version-1.5-semi-sequel, was the game that brought us an emotional reunion with all faces and places we'd completely lost touch with a year down the line.

More than that, we know we can trust *SSX3* because past experience tells us that it'll be a game with no grander ambition than to tickle our fun button until we vomit joy-chunks all over our joypad. Forget about physics, forget about the laws of gravity and prepare to laugh heartily as you witness realism being beaten to death with a giant cartoon mallet. It's a game prepared to lay a bouquet of dead flowers on the grave of Isaac Newton with the message, 'U wuz rong' attached, and all in the name of showing you a good time. That's why we're relying on *SSX3*. That's why snowboarding is coming home.



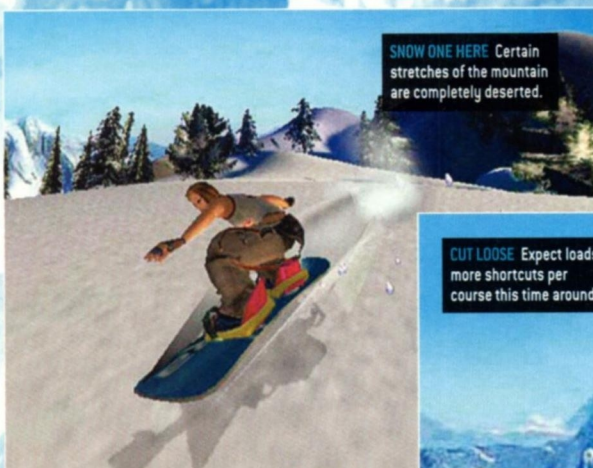
SNOW MOTION We'll never tire of snow-based puns. Sorry.



LEAPS AND BOUNDS You have to work harder for the big airs.

PREVIEW

SSX 3 OUT OF BOUNDS



SNOW ONE HERE Certain stretches of the mountain are completely deserted.



CUT LOOSE Expect loads more shortcuts per course this time around.



TRICK OR COMPETE Freestyle or enter races – it's up to you.

When you answer the door, however, don't expect it to look exactly as you remember. Because EA Canada producer Larry LaPierre is determined to keep the series fluid and forward-moving, even if that means making wholesale changes: "It's a challenge to improve and keep fresh what we've done in the past. If we just iterate on the same game formula, eventually we'll wear it out. That's not our style so we're taking a few calculated risks." Bottom line: *Tricky* was a sequel in inverted commas, *SSX3* will be a full-blown follow-up, with all-new tracks, all-new characters, all-new moves, all-new game modes and an all-new online option.

The most significant difference is that *SSX3* is based entirely on one large mountain, currently

known by the developer rather cleverly as the Big ****ing Mountain. Whereas in previous games you journeyed across the globe in search of the whitest snow and the steepest piste, taking in the sights of Tokyo, Hawaii and the east coast of the USA along the way, now you stay put within a single location, albeit one that spans an expanse of land that dwarfs the environments of *SSX* and *Tricky* put together. "There are three unique peaks that make up the whole mountain," asserts LaPierre. "You start on the lower peak, which is the first of three. You master each peak successively, ascending the mountain while opening up more competitions and unique areas."

It's all in accordance with Sequel's Law, which plainly states that all follow-ons must be bigger, better, prettier and – as our Canadian chum is all too aware – more open and less restrictive: "There are so many things to do in this world and the progression is so flexible that if you prefer racing you're in for a real challenge. If you prefer tricks, we've also improved that aspect greatly. And if you prefer to freeride and take on short mini challenges as you ride, we have that as well. Each of these paths will have you ascending to the peak for the ultimate ride." By



UBER THE TOP Building up to a Super Uber takes a serious level of commitment.



this, LaPierre is referring to the fact that once you've mastered Big ****ing Mountain in circuit-sized installments, you'll have the chance to ride the entire thing in one go, a feat that he predicts will take players around half an hour of solid boarding.

COURSE OF ACTION

The key to the initial success of *SSX* was the magnificent level design, which encouraged you to replay tracks over and over again until you'd smashed your way through every single one of the shortcuts on offer. We also liked the fact the routes were moderately lengthy, often taking you three or four minutes to hurtle, arms flapping, from the top to the bottom. So what can we expect this time? "I can confirm that the rides are all several minutes or longer. You have to think about it a little differently now. Once we put you into the mountain world you're there, you board everywhere, you open new areas and then you catch the lift back up the peak and go at it again. You haven't had an over-the-top ride



IT'S TRICKY, TRICKY, TRICKY

COMBOS-A-GO-GO WITH THE NEW AND IMPROVED STUNT SYSTEM.

Not only will *SSX3* allow you to pull off more spectacular one-off moves, it'll also assist you in linking together chains of moves for higher scores, as LaPierre is keen to point out. "You can combo the Uber moves and hold them as long as you dare. There are rail Ubers, there are nose and tail presses with a multitude of things you can string together from your nose or tail. The core tricks have been redone to give an even better feel." The fact that you can also perform hand-plants means you'll be able to drag those massive combos out for minutes at a time. It all sounds fantastic.



EXCITEMENT'S MOUNTAIN Win races, earn money, buy stuff.



ICE WORK A leading SFX designer helped create the new flicky snow.



SNOW BLOW You can now counter-attack when set upon.



TRACK RECORD The lack of level editor galls us slightly.



/ RIDING THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN IN ONE GO WILL TAKE GAMERS AROUND HALF AN HOUR OF SOLID BOARDING /

like this before." Apparently the shortcuts will be harder to find this time around. Not only that, a number of the hidden routes will only be accessible once you've completed the requisite Big Challenge, which, according to LaPierre, adds a layer of strategy to determining the best way down the Big ****ing Mountain.

Our only concern is that the courses will end up looking somewhat similar, if exactly not the same. Surely the only reason the first two games were spread out across the globe was to allow the developer to break out the crayons and colour its game from the broadest of all possible spectrums. Won't basing it in one location leave it looking a little... well white? Apparently not according to our source. The Big ****ing Mountain is to be divided up into 17 distinct sections, from "bustling downtown areas" to deserted back-country runs, where those who take a serious fall are destined to suffer long, lonely deaths. The varying weather conditions and the passage from night to day ensure that none of the courses will look the same.



ABOVE BOARD Linking moves together is easy. Sort of.

While we're on the subject of the tracks, wouldn't it be nice if *SSX3* allowed us to design our own courses, using an idiot-proof rubberised toolset based on the kit used by the developers? *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4* did it, why can't *SSX3*? Then we could play *Out of Bounds* forever and we'd never have to buy another game again. Which, now we think about it, might partly explain the following company line: "We've looked at this a few times now. We compared what the user would end up with against us spending our time on other features, and the other features keep being more important. Our worlds are so complex and crafted it's tough to boil them down to 'pieces' that a user can put together to create a good experience. I'm sure we'll be looking at it again in the future though." It stands to reason. After all, you don't sell



TRICKY STYLE Here's hoping the soundtrack can equal Tricky's.

FOCUS ON... ELISE

MEET THE LONGEST-SERVING MEMBER OF THE SSX STABLE.



ELISE

PROFILE: An ex-model described by sources as Amazonian, which is a polite way of saying that she's got big knockers and a chunky bottom.

STYLE: Designer piste-wear, custom-made to complement her muscular frame.

AS A FRIEND: Stay out of Elise's way, refrain from causing her bodily harm, and she's one of the most loyal characters in the game. A good rider to have on your side.

AS A FOE: The flipside of this is that Elise can be extremely bitchy when crossed. Often she'll go out of her way to impede you, even if that means dropping back out of the pack.

someone a deep-fat fryer if you've been serving them chips every night for the last ten years.

TEAM LYCRA

OK, we've established the Where (the Big ****ing Mountain), we've established the Why (to get to the top of the Big ****ing Mountain) and we've established the When (*Out of Bounds*, out to buy before Xmas). All we need to know now is the Who. *SSX3* has a total of ten characters, 60% of whom you'll have met before, 40% of whom are new to the series. So welcome back Mac, the turntablist with attitude, Moby, the true Brit, Elise, the Canadian with the tidy cans, Kaori, the cute Japanese girl, Psymon, the nut-job, and Zoe, the hard woman, while simultaneously waving good-bye to Eddie, the white man with the ginger afro, JP, the snooty Frenchman, and Marisol, the Hispanic chick with the big arse.

SSX has always been an equal opportunities employer, so it's no surprise that the four replacements drafted in hail from a diverse range of backgrounds. Nate, an ex-dirt-biker

PREVIEW

SSX 3 OUT OF BOUNDS

ICE TO MEET YOU Two players can race online via the broadband adapter.



with fists like wardrobes, comes from Colorado; Viggo, a gentle-giant, is from parts Scandinavian; Allegra, a teenage girl with more attitude than the average Jerry Springer audience, fights out of Europe; while Griff, a precocious 12-year-old boy, is directly from 'The Streets'. He eats chocolate and he's scruffy like a tramp. He's our favourite new character.

Whichever of the ten boarders you select will be required to think with their fists, as well as their heads and their feet. It's part of a rich traditional of gamesmanship within the SSX circuit. In the original game, when within striking range of an opponent, it was possible to aim a glancing blow in their general direction with the intention of throwing them off course. *Tricky* took this idea and ran with it, introducing a system whereby riders remembered everything

you did and thereafter reacted either amicably or violently towards you depending on your actions. *Out of Bounds* pushes it further still by allowing you to block and counter moves as they're thrown at you. Hand-to-hand combat is still a very minor part of the game admittedly, and we've been informed that weapons are definitely a no-go, but at least when the time does come to engage a fellow rider in fisticuffs you'll have a bit more of a chance to defend yourself.

THE ÜBER ÜBER

The best way to beat an opponent will always be to out-race them, however, and performing tricks – and therefore building up your turbo bar – is an integral part of that process. The key question confronting LaPierre and his comrades when designing *SSX3* was as follows – how do we trump *SSX Tricky*, the game that armed the player the Uber Trick, a manoeuvre of astonishing athleticism and Olympian poise? After numerous brain-storming sessions and late-night arguments in the walnut-paneled boardrooms of five-star hotels, they settled on the following answer. Place the word 'Super' before the word 'Uber' and make the resulting trick slightly fancier and a touch more intuitive to execute. Allow LaPierre to fill in your blanks: "The new Super Ubers are broken into

**/ THEY'VE
PLACED
THE WORD
'SUPER'
BEFORE THE
WORD 'UBER'
AND MADE
THE TRICKS
SLIGHTLY
FANCIER /**

three levels, which means you'll have to earn the right to pull one off – first work through level one, then through level two, then finally through to level three. The bonus scoring is expanded and there are extra points for perfect landings and style. There are freestyle focused areas – superpipes, big airs and huge slope-style runs that have many unique lines. You'll spend days on any one just trying to find that perfect line." We'll give you a second to let all that sink in...

Another reason we loved *SSX Tricky* was the celebrity voiceovers. Macy Gray, Lucy Liu, David Arquette, Billy Zane, performance artist Jim Rose and Patricia 'I'm only semi-famous

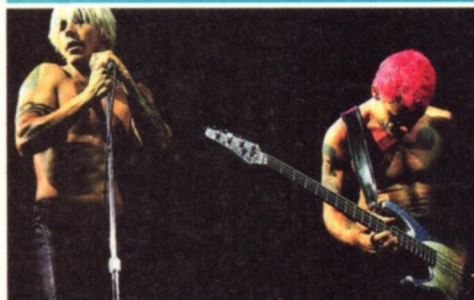
PIPE AND SLIPPERS The icy freestyle areas are there to be used and abused.



GOING DOWN Land straight and you'll accrue a higher score.

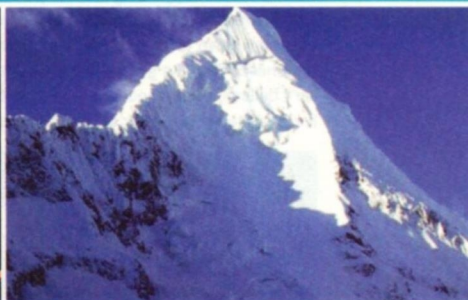
AND ANOTHER THING...

SCRAPS OF OTHER SSX3-RELATED INFO GATHERED TOGETHER TO FORM A SATISFYING WHOLE.



>> SOUNDTRACK <<

LIKE *SSX TRICKY*, *OUT OF BOUNDS* WILL FEATURE A MUSICAL SCORE PROVIDED BY A NUMBER OF LEADING ACTS. SO FAR, THE RED HOT CHILLI PEPPERS, THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS AND THE EXECUTIONERS HAVE ALL BEEN CONFIRMED.



>> EXTRAS <<

EXCELLENCE IS REWARDED WITH COINAGE TO BE SPENT ON NEW EQUIPMENT AND MORE FASHIONABLE TRINKETS. THE ATTRIBUTES SYSTEM IS NOW DEEPER, AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO RENAME MOUNTAIN PEAKS AS YOU CONQUER THEM.



>> GRAPHICS <<

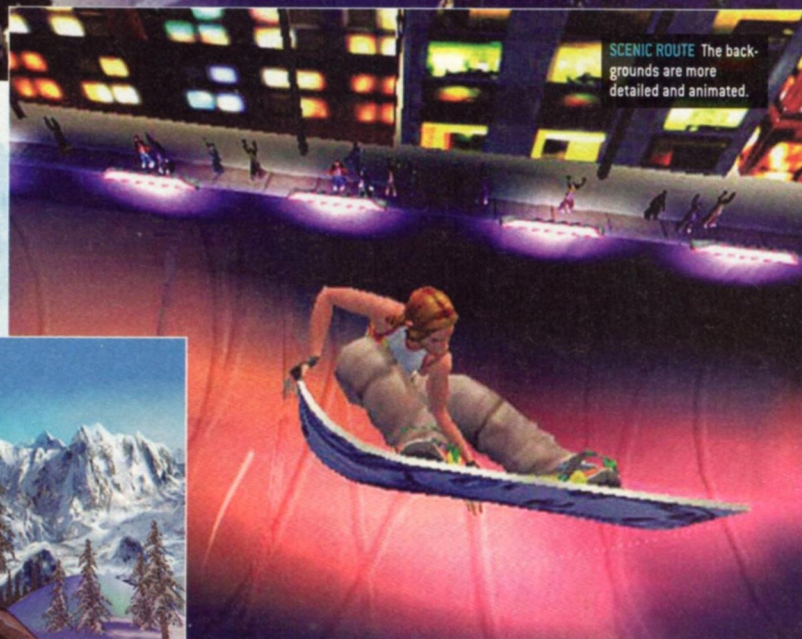
EA BIG ENLISTED THE HELP OF AN UNNAMED OSCAR-NOMINATED EFFECTS GURU TO HELP INCREASE THE VISUAL RICHNESS OF THE GAME. HE EARNED HIS MONEY BY MAKING THE SNOW SPARKLE AND BY MAKING IT FLOAT ON THE WIND.



SSX-RATED Prepare your hallowed copy of *SSX Tricky* for Computer Exchange.



SILENT HILL You can ride wherever you please, so carry a map at all times.



SCENIC ROUTE The backgrounds are more detailed and animated.



therefore I require all the films I've ever appeared in to be placed in brackets immediately after my name' Velazquez (*The Mummy Returns*) all recorded audio clips for the game. Sure it wasn't a big deal, but, like a wink from the family doctor moments before he begins examining your anal cavity, it was a small gesture with the power to place everything around it in a completely different context. Suddenly we weren't just a loser holding a joypad, we were hob-nobbing it with the A-list, playing a game that at some point had rubbed up and down against beautiful, famous, rich, tanned women. These taunts and cheers, along with a monumental soundtrack, gave *SSX Tricky* a strong – dare we say it – fashionable identity. So what's in store this time around?: "The thing we are most interested in is getting the best personality performance for the characters. Sometimes casting celebrity talent can work against the character's own identity because the celebrity has such a strong image themselves. If

the character doesn't match that image it likely won't work." We couldn't agree more, but we want names. Jennifer Garner? Avril Lavigne? Adam Woodyatt? Captain Beefheart? Come on, spill 'em: "Hmm. Good suggestions. We're in discussions with a few celebrities, but there's nothing to announce just yet." Oh, just tell us....

WHITE PHONE LINES

All that remains then is to detail the multiplayer aspect of the game, which, depending on whether or not you've imported the broadband adapter, is either at end of this feature because it's the most amazing aspect of *SSX3*, therefore the headline act, or because it's largely insignificant, therefore treated as an afterthought. LaPierre (the more times we type it, the more we wish our surname was LaPierre)

/ YOU'LL SPEND DAYS ON ANY ONE COURSE ATTEMPTING TO FIND THE PERFECT RACING LINE /

told us in strictest confidence that a two-player online game will complement the traditional split-screen head-to-head mode. It's unclear at present how many computer-controlled riders you'll be able to compete with, though considering that a large percentage of you won't be ready to hook-up to PS2 Online by the time *SSX3* launches, that hardly seems relevant. Those interested in net play have the option there if they want it. That's the important thing.

We won't know for a few months if *SSX3* is the game we hope it's going to be. But the sweet part is, the months between writing this and finding out are to be filled with our own winter, skibunnies in tight pants and drinkies in front of the fire. By the time your suntan has begun to return, just as the school year is pooping itself out, as the days gradually become longer, *Out of Bounds* will be ready to return the winter magic to us all over again. It's all too perfect.

/ JON BROWN



TALK SPORT Expect a host of big-name celebrity voiceovers.



HANDS UP... If you've got all of five seconds left to live.

FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

SSX3 promises to be the five-star sequel that *SSX Tricky* so very nearly was. Large-scale changes made to the structure in addition to the gob-full of spit and polish applied to the stunt engine could make *Out of Bounds* a very real candidate for the best game of the year. Stick with *PSW* to see how this one pans out come the sunny season.

'STARING DOWN THE BARREL OF A PSYCHOPATH'S GUN'



ON THE EDGE. Things don't start promisingly for hero George.



WHAT IS THE SLEEPING DRAGON? Answers on a postcard please.



BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON

AS WHIP-CRACKING AS INDIANA JONES AND AS BRAIN-TEASING AS COUNTDOWN – ADVENTURE GAMES COME OF AGE IN THE NEW *BROKEN SWORD*.

TYPE	ADVENTURE
PUBLISHER	THQ
GAME GLANCE	
/ Third instalment of the <i>Broken Sword</i> series / Brain-challenging puzzles / Rip-roaring adventure!	

FSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ It's still got that hand-drawn look
- ▲ A plot more gripping than a grizzly bear hug

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ The pace of play may not suit everyone
- ▼ Newcomers have plenty of plot to catch up on

WITH HIS DIRTY WHITE SHIRT and leather bag slung across his shoulder, George Stobbart is the very model of a modern day Indiana Jones. Strapped on board a 30s style propeller plane as it picks its way across the steaming jungles of North Africa, he seems even more like the legendary archaeologist, but George is no Indy and it's wits, not whips, that are his weapon of choice. After all, when you're caught in the middle of an electrical storm at 20,000 feet it's hard to see how a kinky S&M tool can really be of any help, especially when a direct hit from a bolt of lightning sends George's plane into a rapidly descending freefall.

One tense crash scene later and George is left counting his blessings – he may have crashed into the jungles of the Congo, but at least he's still alive... or is he? Something's not right and one quick glance out the window reveals George's worst fears: the plane has landed on the edge of a cliff and is gradually losing balance, second by second veering closer to oblivion. To make matters worse, the pilot has been knocked

unconscious during the flight and the only objects of use lying around are a heavy crate and a bottle of beer.

NICO TO SEE YOU, TO SEE YOU NICO

And so the scene is set for the return to one of adventure gaming's best loved series. Originally appearing on both PC and Sony's ageing PSOne the *Broken Sword* games mixed beautiful hand-drawn 2D graphics together with well-crafted brain teasers and rollicking good storylines. Pleasingly, the third, and concluding, instalment of the series, *The Sleeping Dragon*, maintains this delicate balance of story, puzzles and superb graphics and wraps it all up in a crisp, three-dimensional pastry. It is to the adventure genre, if you will, what 24 is to television: fresh, exciting and thoroughly absorbing. A new head on old shoulders and all the more appealing for it.

But what about George? Time is running short and the plane is already slipping downwards.

First things first: the unconscious pilot. George can't risk carrying him for fear of the plane losing balance, but luckily the pilot is a

fellow Australian and one quick whiff of the traditional smelling salts later (in other words, the waft of beer from the bottle) and he's suddenly more awake than an insomniac on an amphetamines overdose. But the plane is still overbalanced, so George must carefully push the crate just far enough down one end of the plane to balance it, then he and the pilot can escape out the back and down the cliff. Simple! Not really. Seconds after George and his friend begin making their descent the plane finally overbalances and tumbles down after them. Is this the end for our intrepid hero?

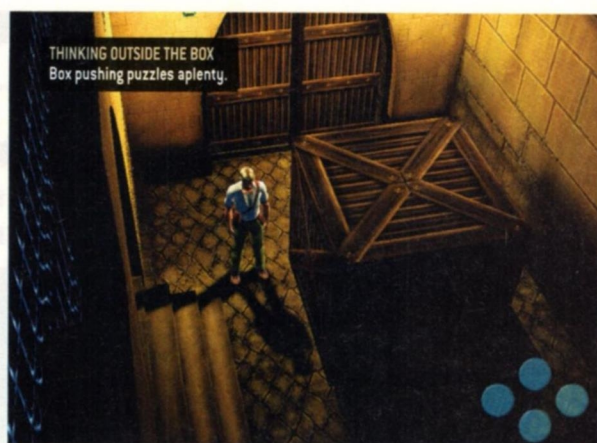
...And cut to a leafy Paris suburb as George's photographer girlfriend Nico arrives at the apartment of a prominent computer hacker. She's there to interview him about the mysterious Voynich Manuscript, an ancient text written in an undecipherable code, but as she steps up to the front door a gun shot is suddenly heard from inside. Desperately Nico tries to open the door, but it's locked and the would be assassin can already be heard making his (or her!) escape. What is Nico to do?



HANG IN THERE Hey, Indy! Where's your hat mate!



TRES CHIC Nico steps out onto the streets of Paris.



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX Box pushing puzzles aplenty.



PISS ARTIST Looks like our advertising guy is at again.



ACTION LADY Burglary was always easier during the day.

PREVIOUSLY ON BROKEN SWORD

MISSED THE ORIGINALS? CATCH UP WITH OUR HANDY SUMMARY



BROKEN SWORD: SHADOW OF THE TEMPLARS

American tourist in Paris George Stobbart is caught up in a dangerous chase across Europe after a group of powerful people, who claim to hold the secret power of the mystical Knights Templar, leave a briefcase full of Semtex sitting near him in a café. Working with the French photographer Nico Collard, can George put paid to the Templars nefarious plans?



BROKEN SWORD 2: THE SMOKING MIRROR

Having defeated the Templars in a daring attack on their secret base deep in the Scottish highlands, George returns to Paris only to discover that Nico – now his girlfriend – has been kidnapped by a crime syndicate with more than a passing interest in an ancient Mayan cult. Could the mysterious power of the pyramids be the key to all George's questions?

ENTER THE SLEEPING DRAGON

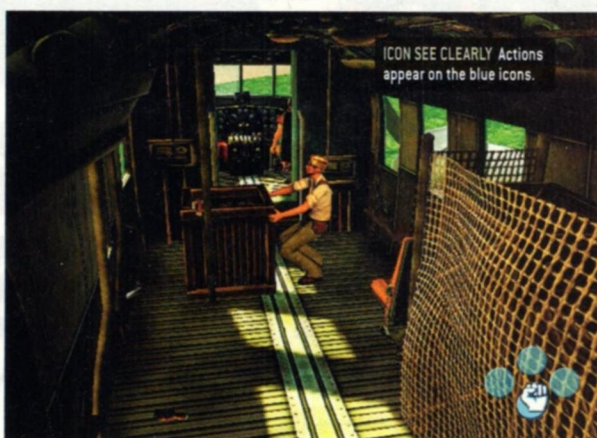
It's a cliché, but *The Sleeping Dragon* really is a 'rollercoaster ride' of a game. Constantly switching between George and Nico at the most cliffhanging moments, it is the perfect example of how a game can keep your interest hooked throughout. Even the gentle pace with which George and Nico wander around the striking environments can't hide the fact that the next spectacular set piece is just around the corner. One minute you're questioning a Parisian traffic warden, the next you're staring down the barrel of a psychopath's silenced gun.

But it's all part and parcel of George and Nico's daredevil lifestyle and veterans of the series will be pleased to hear that the deep, action-packed

plotlines of the originals, remain the strongest element of the game.

Replacing the 'point-and-click' control method of the originals however, whereby George and Nico moved round the screen via a roving mouse pointer, is a joypad control system where pertinent options such as pick up and open only appear on the buttons when needed. The beauty of such a simple system is that it really helps to immerse you in the amazing environments and the heady combination of sleuthing, exploring and action, through locations such as Prague, Africa and even Glastonbury, serves to give everything that polished feel of 'blockbuster'.

The Sleeping Dragon is a new breed of adventure game. It's not an action game *per se*,



ICON SEE CLEARLY Actions appear on the blue icons.

/ IT IS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF HOW A GAME CAN KEEP YOUR INTEREST HOOKED ALL THE WAY THROUGH /

but it still features plenty of action and stealth scenes. It's not a role-playing game like *Final Fantasy*, but it still boasts a wonderful story and memorable characters, and while it's not a straight puzzle game, it's still packed with plenty of clever brain-teasers. It is, in fact, the perfect tonic to a genre of game that has had nothing spectacular to speak of since the intriguing and under-appreciated *Ico*. If it's not already, then may we suggest that *The Sleeping Dragon* goes somewhere on your 'most wanted' list.

/ MARK ROBINS

FIRST OPINIONS

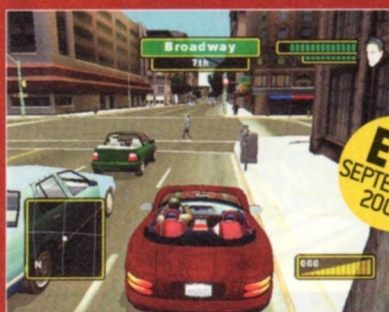
PSW

Updating the hugely popular *Broken Sword* series (and when we say huge we mean millions of copies sold) was always going to be a tall order, but *The Sleeping Dragon* looks set to give long-standing fans exactly what they want, while newcomers can look forward to a delightful slice of adventure-based gaming. We're expecting something very special with this one.

"HOOKERS WILL BE DOING DOUBLE TAKES ON YOUR ASS"



TAKE HIM AWAY The chef faints at the sight of a pay dispute.



KERB CRAWLER If pedestrians are too slow, shoot them.

ETA
SEPTEMBER
2003



HELP THE AGED Kang saves a choking pensioner.

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

SAY HELLO TO HOLLYWOOD AND HOWDY TO THE MOB, PIMPS, HOOKERS AND HOBOS.

TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
GAME GLANCE	
/	120 missions
/	400-square mile map
/	35 vehicles
/	15 guns

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ Looks better than *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*
- ▲ It's set in Los Angeles and not London

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ The soundtrack is 100% hip hop
- ▼ It isn't out over here until September

IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY THAT

The Getaway dumped you in the seedy gangster-filled back streets of London, *True Crime: Streets of LA*

unveils the crack-riddled projects and sprawling freeways of Los Angeles. As the first proper *GTA* clone to make an appearance on PS2, expectations are high. The game hits the shelves in September, arriving a full year before the next instalment of *GTA* is due. Will it leave *GTA: Vice City* for dead, bleeding in the gutter or will it go the way of *The Getaway*, offering glitz but no gameplay?

Rather than have you prance around as a suit-

wearing ponce with a pistol, *True Crime: Streets of LA* gives you the role of a ruthless cop armed with everything from an AK47 to a pair of stolen uzis. Using *Vice City* as a template, the game packs in more extras than a Hollywood film set. With a game map almost double the size of *Vice City*, it's surprising to see that the setting looks visually superior in every way. Bullet time shoot outs, complex melee combat and hectic car chases are designed to make *GTA* devotees sit up, pay attention and realise how much fun *Vice City* would be if it was set in a real city like LA.

LA LA LAND

From the very beginning, LAPD wildcard Nick Kang is given a brief to beat the mob, handed a sports car and issued with a trusty Glock .45. Meatier weapons are gained by killing criminals and taking firearms into police custody.

Lethal Weapon-style cut-scenes provide an equal balance of comedy and carnage and there's no denying that cruising through Santa Monica in a drop top feels infinitely more cinematic and glamorous than *GTA*. Voice actors include Gary Oldman and a team of seasoned gangster actors which will be unveiled in the run up to release. Famous landmarks lurk around every corner, such is the accuracy of *True Crime's* Los Angeles. It's possible to visit movie scene streets from *Pretty Woman*, *Beverly Hills Cop* and *Charlie's Angels* within minutes of turning on your engine. Even LA's most famous English theme pub turns up. Sadly it's not possible to go in, order a pint of Harp and play some darts with a tubby ex-sportsman still dreaming of an 80s Botham innings while leering at busty skanks with peroxidized hair and fake tan.

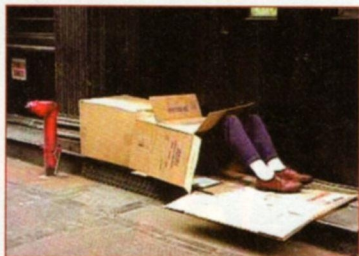
Hand-to-hand combat is based around face-cracking martial arts moves and once you've got a gun, enemies can be held and used as bullet shields while you take pot shots at their mates. When enemies become airborne, Kang can juggle opponents against walls and drop them on a wad



ROUND THE BEND Kang staggers away from the bar, pissed.

LA CONFIDENTIAL

PSW POINTS OUT THE PEOPLE THAT YOU WILL MEET IN LA.



>> TRAMPS

Frequently seen sleeping by the beach, sipping cappuccinos and smoking crack. Like being on holiday while on the dole.



>> BEACH BABES

They have fake breasts, they sunbathe topless and they sometimes play volleyball. But 'they' do not want 'you'.



>> LEMMY

The ugly Motörhead warface has a flat in Santa Monica and strolls around the city looking for groupies past the age of 55.



STRAIGHT TO THE HEART Kang gives the LAPD a bad name.



MAXIMUM PAYNE Haven't we seen you somewhere before?



of splinter-laden boxes. One particularly gruesome scrap in a garage sees Kang pummel an enemy into submission, place him under an elevated car and then crush him with the flick of a switch. Another indoor fight scene involves the traditional mob hangout of a walk-in restaurant freezer in which you have to blast mobsters hanging from rotating meat hooks. The gunplay continues when speeding down the freeways and in another Woo-inspired moment, you can actually spin against other cars like in *Mission Impossible 2*, while popping caps into enemy vehicles. Dedicated car combo moves mean you can perform flawless U turns or even hop up on two wheels to speed between lines of traffic, evade enemy fire and weave through a back street slalom course of dustbins and tramps. If the action becomes violent and things get messed up, the LAPD is always on your side and turns a blind eye to speeding, accidental drive bys and the occasional, but acceptable, hazard of

flipping a dawdling pensioner over the bonnet of a Ferrari 360 clone. Yes, the cars aren't real, but they are as close to the real thing as you can get, minus the badge. Developer Luxoflux has confirmed that boats, helicopters and bikes will eventually be present alongside more bizarre hidden vehicles. Like planes with the ability to drop bombs.

CITY OF ANGELS

All that remains to make *True Crime: Streets of LA* a real gangster thriller is the sound track. Getting in a vehicle triggers an explosion of chassis shaking west coast hip hop. Speed along the beach with stereo pumping, roof down and Uzi at the ready and hookers will be doing double takes on yo' ass faster than you can shoot them in the legs. The aim is to wipe out the mob and become a hero, but shooting pedestrians and sniping tramps is still just as much fun.

/ RICHARD MELVILLE

FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

Competing with *GTA* is no easy task. *The Getaway* had a good stab, but didn't come close to recreating the free roaming fun of gangster gun fights in 80s Miami. *True Crime: Streets of LA* unashamedly admits to the grand theft of all *Vice City* ideas, but manages to provide deeper combat, slicker visuals and the biggest mix of game styles ever witnessed by PSW. We can't tell if it's better than *Vice City* just yet, but one thing is for sure – *The Getaway* will be swimming with the fishes come September.

"JAK APPEARS TO HAVE FINALLY GONE PUBIC"



ETA
DECEMBER
2003

JAK II: RENEGADE

JAK AND DAXTER GROW OLD DISGRACEFULLY. A GAME FOR YOUNGER BROTHERS ONLY? NO WAY.

TYPE PLATFORM
PUBLISHER SONY
GAME GLANCE
/ More than 75 missions / 17 playing areas / Added swearing

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ It's like the first one, only bigger
- ▲ You can drive cars
- ▲ It sounds a bit like GTA3

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ Danger it could take itself too seriously
- ▼ Bound to make our fingers hurt for a while

PLEASE FORGIVE US FOR OUR sweeping and slightly inaccurate caricatures, but *Jak and Daxter* was childware (ie aimed at small people who laugh at the word 'botty') whereas *Jak II: Renegade* is manware (ie aimed at big people with insurance policies, aftershave and leather wallets). How did we arrive at such a conclusion? Because we've carefully examined the material released to us thus far, using highly advanced skills of analysis that only a fresh memory of yesterday's episode of *CSI: Miami* can bring.

Exhibit A is the name. It's *Jak II: Renegade*. The 'Daxter' has been dropped, presumably on account of the fact that it sounds like it refers to a small furry cartoon creature. Which of course it does. Or did. Then there's the decision to go with a roman numeral 'II' instead of a plain old number '2'. As you may or may not know, only adults understand roman numerals. Exhibit B is the fact that both Jak and Daxter have aged considerably

since we saw them last. Jak appears to have gone pubic – listen to his booming voice for proof of that – while Daxter now litters his patter with the mildest of mild cuss words. Developer Naughty Dog clearly felt it was time for their kids to grow up, and what better way to hurry that painful process along than by teaching them to how to swear? Parents [hi Mum!], take note.



JAK YOUR BODY Daxter has to get off his arse this time around.

Exhibit C is the large amounts of gun usage featured in the game. Whereas in *Jak and Daxter* part one you dispatched enemies by twirling like a baby hurricane, now you pull out your piece and reduce key bodyparts to a thick, meaty paste. The gun in question belongs to Jak and can be upgraded from a shotgun to a machinegun, from a machinegun to a chain gun and from a chain gun to a grenade launcher. This alone ups the ante beyond the reach of your average six-year-old child.

ANGRY YOUNG MEN

While we're on the subject of the combat, exhibit D is that the cuddlesome animals you tangled with in the original game have been replaced by baddies in a stern-faced human form. It's all part of a concerted drive to make the game environment more believable, which it is, due to both this and the fact that the streets are now far busier and far grubbier. The game world is massive, and by massive we mean MASSIVE in

THE NEW BITS

THINGS HAVE CHANGED A BIT SINCE THE FIRST JAK AND DAXTER. PSW SHOWS YOU HOW...



SHOOT TO THRILL
Weapons are a central part of *Jak II*, so get ready to spend plenty of time at the shooting range. Note the laser sight on Jak's morphing gun.



DAXTER SPIRIT
He might've seen his name removed from the title, but this time around Daxter plays more of a leading role. He's been given his own set of levels and everything.



THE FUZZ! SCARPER!
Like *Vice City*, horse around too much and you'll find yourself surrounded by policemen. Lay low for a short while and your wanted rating will drop.



I'M ALRIGHT JAK
Collect enough power-ups and you can turn into Dark Jak, an invincible electro-warrior capable of frying anyone foolish enough to invade his personal space.

capital letters. Try 24 times the size of the playing area in part one. We wanted to put MASSIVE in a bold font for extra emphasis but the designers wouldn't let us.

Which in a roundabout kind of way brings us onto exhibit E, the fact that our hero can now drive any of the vehicles to be found lining the streets. After undertaking a basic hijack, Jak can swerve recklessly in the motor of his choice until such time as: A) the cows come home, B) the pigs start flying, or C) he drives into a lamppost and the engine stops working. The more we go on, the more we become aware of the similarities between *Jak II* and *Grand Theft Auto III*. Just an observation folks.



CHILD-PROOF You wouldn't think it, but *Jak II* is more adult.

Exhibit F is the storyline, which weaves together a number of very important adult themes, from the dangers of capitalism (the future state in which *Jak and Daxter* arrive is ruled over by a small number of super-rich magnates) to the manifold moral quandaries involved in the testing of new scientific processes on defenceless animals (Jak gets arrested early on and becomes a human blotting pad in the laboratory of an evil mob boss). It's not exactly heavyweight stuff admittedly, but from the opening cut-scene onwards you get the sense that *Jak II* is taking itself slightly more seriously than its predecessor. The good news is it's still fairly funny.

POLICE AND THIEVES

Our final piece of evidence, exhibit G, is that *Jak II* players will be held accountable for their actions. Why? Because Naughty Dog – law-abiding citizens that they are – has created a highly disciplined police force to rule over their crime-ridden virtual city. Get caught attempting to steal a set of wheels and any officers in the area will be all over your arse like a pair of tight-fitting underpants made entirely from soggy newspaper. Remember the time you posted that electricity bill for your Nan when her leg was playing up? That's the level of

responsibility you'll need to maintain here for hours at time. Daunting or what?

We'll admit to being slightly concerned that the adultification process will see much of the happy charm of the original darkened and smeared somewhat, particularly when people associated with the project are talking about, "Jak's conflicts as a protagonist". But then if we learnt anything from the original it's that sometimes you've just got to forget all your worries to listen to the words of the furry creature sat parrot-like on your shoulder. And at present ours is saying, "Relax my friends. *Jak II* will be so good that goat's milk will dribble from your nipples." He's been drinking all day you know. Even still, he's probably right.

/ JON BROWN

FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

Forget the change in tone for a second. The fact is that everything we liked about *Jak and Daxter* – the free-roaming nature of the play, the mini-games, the fact that you never had to suffer a loading screen – will be incorporated into *Jak II*. Naughty Dog may be interested in taking the series to a new audience, but they certainly haven't forgotten about us die-hards.

"JUST THINK OF THE INSULT POTENTIAL"

ETA
JULY
2003

"DIE YOU BAD TERRORIST WALLY!" That's the kind of language you'll hear bandied around online.



COVERT COMMAND Issue orders to your troops. Then kill him yourself anyway. For it is your way.

SOCOM: NAVY SEALS

SONY ONLINE CURDLED OUR MINDS! THAT'S WHAT SOCOM STANDS FOR. MAYBE.

TYPE	SHOOTING... ONLINE!
PUBLISHER	SONY
GAME GLANCE	- First proper online title - Team stealth action - Mike for online chatting

LET'S HAVE SOME KIND OF CRAZY,

internet fanfare! For the first of Sony's online games is finally getting released over here. *SOCOM: Navy SEALs* is a four-man tactical squad stealth simulation. You'll be in charge of a team of sneaking operatives from the Navy's hardest recruits, infiltrating the most dangerous criminal organisations worldwide. Think recent release *Splinter Cell*, only with three other black-suited fellas watching your back. The twist is that when online finally hits here in Oz, your team and the terrorists could be real people anywhere around the world. And what's more, thanks to the bundled headset you can actually speak to them. It's the future, folks.

According to *SOCOM's* plot, a slavish terrorist organisation called the Iron Brothers has been causing no end of bother, and the US government has decided that they all need to be quietly murdered by the Special Operations Command. Play in Single-player mode, and the first level's all about infiltrating a boat in the rain. A later one sees you defusing bombs on an oil platform. If that reminds you of *Metal Gear Solid 2*, don't be fooled. The gameplay's far less stylised in *SOCOM*. If an Iron Brother gets close to you when you're in his field of vision, you're much more likely to die than he is. Taking out all guards is essential if

you want to get through each mission with your team intact. Lose a member, and you'll be radically compromised in terms of what you can accomplish. For example, if your only Russian speaker is shot, you won't be able to understand conversations you hear and therefore you'll fail to gather as much intelligence.

So how will the online talky bit work? Theoretically, you plug in the USB headphone/mike combination, making you look like (optimistically) a Navy SEAL or (realistically) a telesales weekend casual. You then shout your orders into the mike. They're sent onto the net via – excuse the technical jargon – 'some kind of system', and the voices of all the other players are beamed back to you. You can speak only to

players on your side if you like, or you can let friends and enemies hear what you say. This isn't a bad thing. Just think of the insult potential.

I'M ON YOUR SIDE, YOU MUPPET!

It's not just in the Online mode that you'll need the headset, either. During solo play, intel and commands will be relayed through the headphones (well, headphone, as it's only one speaker) and you can even issue your own orders via the techno-magic of voice recognition. In single-player mode, the PS2 uses voice recognition – just hold down a button and speak your commands clearly into the mouthpiece – but it's not particularly useful, given that you can also select a command with a touch of a button.

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

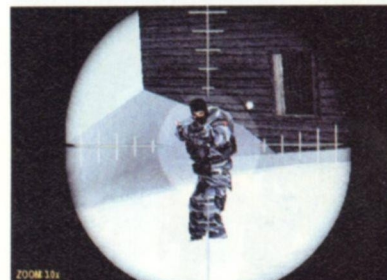
- Talk and fight live online!
- It looks more real than anything we've played
- You'll feel like a SEAL

WORST BECAUSE

- Enemy AI needs work
- Talking to your PS2 might get you locked up
- You'll get shot online. A lot



CRIME TEAM They'll protect you. From behind. Cowards.



YOO HOO, OVER HERE Use the sniper scope to spy. Carefully...



SPEAKING AND SNEAKING

"DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT TO TALK ABOUT OUR DOUBLE GLAZING DISCOUNTS?"

USING THEIR TELESale-STYLE HEADSET, our UK PSW brothers jacked into the intermatrix and tried to chat with (and snipe) real people far away. The first online battle didn't go too well. Here's what happened when they logged onto the US server to play with some Americans, who've had the game since last year.



LEADER: Keep tight! Hostiles on the perimeter!

PSW: Where are you from then? We're in Merry Old England, dontchaknow!



LEADER: Shut up and do your job, soldier!

Tango at six o'clock!

PSW: You asking for a dance? Do you think this is some kind of chatroom?



LEADER: Limey, if I hear one more word out of you I swear to God I'll execute you myself.

PSW: That's fighting talk! Have some, septic!

The combination of music and effects from the telly and communication through the headset is great for making you feel that bit more immersed in the game. The desperate screams of your team-mates in your ears as they're shot don't exactly lessen the sense of danger, either.

There's a stripped-down, pleasingly realistic quality to the game, with shadows, fog and snow aplenty to hide your stealth shenanigans. Tension fills the air when you're entering unknown territory, although it does seem possible to gun your way through areas occasionally. Hardware is a military issue, and you'll be using C4 explosives, sniper rifles and grenades pretty much from the beginning of the game. As the old saying goes: there's nothing so stealthy as a really huge explosion.



CLOSE YOUR EYES Everybody knows that if you close your eyes, you become invisible. Right?



SNOW BLOW Only try for attention-grabbing bombs like this once all the enemies are dead.

BAND OF UNDERCOVER BROTHERS

Team play goes deeper than just covering fire. You play one of a two-man unit, which actually takes out the majority of the enemies, while there are always two operatives in Bravo unit to back you up. You can order the two units around independently or as one group, and there're dozens of individual commands to issue. In online mode, up to 16 people can play as either side in one arena, making for plenty of crazed sniping-and-sneaking potential. Just don't expect to be able to survive by running in and gunning down your fellow players, that's all. Our experience of this sort of thing on the PC is that the minute you stick your head out, it gets shot by some battle-hardened TA nutter who's been playing for 16 hours straight.

Three multiplayer game modes are included. Suppression is your standard SEALs-vs-terrorists scenario. Hostage Rescue is slightly more delicate, because neither side wants to see the hostages shot. Demolition is perhaps the most cunning, because it's a race between both teams



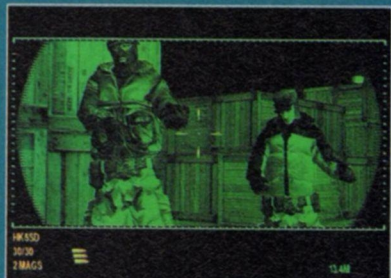
NICE COMBATS D'you think we could have a pair? No? Fair dos.



FOREST CHUMP Most of the time, if you're this close, you'll die.



HAHAHA You're stupid, you stupid terrorist! I'm behind you!



GREEN SCREEN To see in the dark, simply wipe snot on the TV.

to pick up a single bomb in the middle of the arena and use it to blow up the enemy base. There're 16 dedicated online arenas to explore, and the better you get to know them, the more chance you have of keeping all that virtual blood inside your body.

What with shooting and slagging off other internet players, we reckons *SOCOM*'s got a lot of entertainment potential. Only problem is, thanks to Sony's snail-paced online policy we won't be playing it properly locally until August at the earliest. You'll need a broadband modem to play it online, too, so anyone getting their internet through a normal phone line won't get a look in. With local broadband connections serving less than 2% of the population, it's not a massive market, yet. There's no Multiplayer mode for one PS2, either. Can it work solely as a single-player game, and can online play really live up to everyone's expectations? We'll tell you in our review, coming soon. Until then, hold fire. We said hold fire! Oh, never mind.

/ JOFF BROWN

FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

So the future's nearly here, at last – and it's arriving in the form of a pretty complex and detailed looking title. To be honest, the US hasn't gone ga-ga over this game, but we're hoping that the accurate and immersive atmosphere will win us over. Enemies were a little, er, 'childlike' in the version we played, but maybe that's a good thing with all the guards you have to slaughter. If it all works out, it'll be top fun.

"LEARN TO TRUST YOUR FELLOW MAN"

MOVING TARGETS The number of foes depends on how many humans are playing online.



ETA
NOVEMBER
2003



OMEGA DRIVE Expect the age-old SF blend of all-out action and carefully considered sneak play.



"YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING ON YOUR TIE" Creating a diversion for your allies is an art within itself.

SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN

PSW SIFTS THROUGH THE BIGGEST ONLINE GAME YET FOR TRACES OF THE FUTURE.

TYPE	ACTION
PUBLISHER	SONY
GAME GLANCE	
/ Play online with friends	
/ Hundreds of weapons	
/ Create your own spy	

THOUGHTFULLY, WE'VE PLACED the one thing you should take from this preview in the shopping trolley position directly by the entrance.

And here it is – you can play *The Omega Strain* online with three friends you don't want to physically sit with. Reason enough to begin flexing your pleasure muscles in expectation of the full-on workout to come, surely. OK, simmer down Single Player, for you shall be catered for too, so long as you can accept the fact that

unless you invest in a broadband adaptor, you won't see everything that the inaugural PS2 *Syphon Filter* game has to offer.

But that's for later. First, a summary of the series so far for the benefit of those of you turning up late. The words 'Syphon' and 'Filter' denote a game running at full pelt down the dividing line that separates Action from Stealth. So it is that previous instalments have been half *Vice City*, half *Metal Gear*, and always well received. *The Omega Strain* sticks religiously to this winning formula for obvious reasons.

operative proceeds to work upwardly through the ranks of his department, earning promotions based on speed, stealth and the number of civilian casualties incurred during manoeuvres.

When playing with partners, *The Omega Strain* is an entirely different proposition. Not only will you find the level of artificial resistance quadrupled to compensate for the increase in manpower, you'll also soon discover that you can only access certain areas if you have an ally to hand willing to offer you a good old-fashioned

PSW PROPHECY

BEST BECAUSE

- ▲ There's no I in team
- ▲ The team works
- ▲ Going solo is unsociable and can cause chafing

WORST BECAUSE

- ▼ You'll need to be online
- ▼ Gabe's getting old
- ▼ The naftest name since God created 'Dean'



ONLINE OF SIGHT The single-player game has to be solid.

A BRIEF WORD ABOUT THE STORY: MYSTERY

And onto the breaking news that Gabe Logan, the potato face of the previous three games, is to take a backseat for *The Omega Strain*, presumably on account of the fact that he's getting on a bit and doesn't quite understand the concept of the internet. In Gabe's place stands a character entirely of your own design, equipped with any number of the 100+ weapons in the game, then customised with items you've unlocked. Once fully-formed, your rookie



DON'T BE GABE Create a character without a stupid name.

FACT FILTER More weapons, bigger levels, harder henchmen.



IT'S STRAINING MEN Tokyo is one of the few locations we can confirm at present.



boost (NB: this may not be the same good old-fashioned boost you remember if you've ever investigated Uncle's videos). A mastery of the 'Buddy Jump' is hence crucial, explaining why you'll need to keep in almost constant contact with your pals through the *SOCOM* headset.

The most effective tactic when playing as a team is to divide the level into equal slabs and then work the old 'divide and conquer' routine. Any gangs with a gamer going spare should assign someone to act as bait, to be known thereafter as the Dead Man Walking. By strolling through the streets of *Syphon Filter* in tap shoes while whistling loudly, it's possible to attract heat away from the rest of the team and thus sacrifice your own life for the good of the whole. It's a noble way to go, and if you're really rubbish at games, this is you. Get used to it.

COMMANDO OMEGA

In terms of style, *The Omega Strain* is similar to games like *Project Eden* and *Commandos 2* in that the central idea is to co-ordinate the efforts of your troops in a bid to complete a shared goal. The main difference here is that whereas before you either had to rely on your PS2 to steer the

team members not directly under your control, or – more painstakingly still – flick around and command them all one at time, now you can leave it up to living, breathing, belching humans. Whether or not this makes play any easier depends entirely on how strong your faith is in intelligence of your fellow man. For the record, *PSW* isn't so sure. Only this month a grown man whose entire bottom lip was buried under an avalanche of crumbs accosted us in our Redfern street and asked us if we'd like to touch his abscess. Maybe Gabe's right. Maybe we were better off when we all played games alone.



"I'M HAVING MY TEA NOW" Always keep teammates up to date.

TEAMWORK IT OUT

THE PSW GUIDE TO WORKING AS A UNIT.



1. THE BOOST

■ WHAT YOU DO

Find a particularly high wall and form your hands into a U-shape.

■ WHAT YOUR ALLY DOES

Places his foot in your hands and uses you as a human stepladder.



2. THE SUBTLE DIVERSION

■ WHAT YOU DO

Make as much noise as possible to distract the guards from their posts.

■ WHAT YOUR ALLY DOES

Takes advantage of the absence of the sentries to sneak past unnoticed.



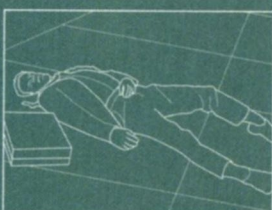
3. THE CONTROL FREAK

■ WHAT YOU DO

Fight up to the control room in order to open doors and flick switches.

■ WHAT YOUR ALLY DOES

Locates the door you've just opened and barrel-rolls through it.



4. THE GRAVE DIGGER

■ WHAT YOU DO

Locate a dead team member and rifle through their pockets.

■ WHAT YOUR ALLY DOES

Remains still as the blood drains from their head onto the floor.



5. THE SHOULDER TO CRY ON

■ WHAT YOU DO

Just be there to offer emotional aid when it all goes wrong.

■ WHAT YOUR ALLY DOES

Lays his head on your shoulder and cries like an injured baby.

Even still, there's more to it than online play. The 13 playing areas are over twice as large as those featured in the original, the character animations are the most impressive we've seen since we last watched a video of a real person and, for all our cynicism, the storyline sounds pretty decent. Another boast currently swelling the press release to A3-size is that the enemy forces are to act as a team, communicating to each other as a pack to bring you down. Sounds nice, but considering that this promise has been broken more times than Britney's virgin seal, we'll hold judgement for the time being.

/ JON BROWN

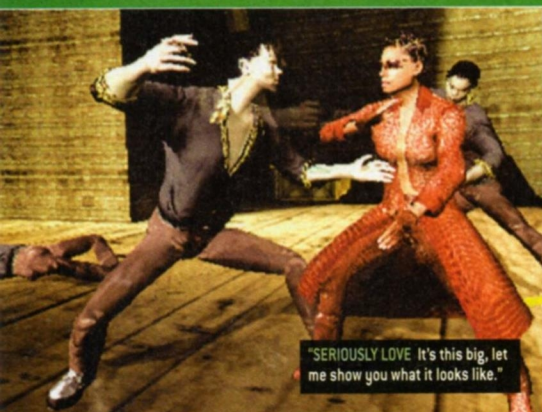
FIRST OPINIONS

PSW

Part three aside (which we don't really count anyway) we've always been impressed by the *Syphon Filter* games, and the more we play *The Omega Strain*, the more we're convinced that there's no danger of this changing any time soon. So long as the single-player matches the multiplayer game in terms of depth and longevity, all will be well. Soon see.

PREVIEW UPDATE

WE'VE PREVIEWED THEM ALREADY, BUT THEY'RE STILL NOT FINISHED. HERE'S A QUICK UPDATE...



"SERIOUSLY LOVE It's this big, let me show you what it looks like."



EEE-OUCH The 'crotch stab' move was always the most effective.



"GO ON PUNCH ME You won't be able to huuuuuh... aaah... ow."

ENTER THE MATRIX

STOP! BULLET TIME. YOUR MONTHLY MATRIX UPDATE IS NOW READY FOR YOUR COLLECTION.

The most pressing revelation to have ambushed us from behind this month regarding *Enter the Matrix* is that certain events in the game can be experienced from the perspective of both of the characters – play as Niobe and the storyline leads you into the back of plane, where you'll engage an agent in hand-to-hand combat; play as Ghost and, while all this goes on up in the air, you'll be down on the ground chasing the plane in a hot-wired motor, attempting to follow it to the landing strip. The moral is, once you've entered the Matrix and exited the other side you'll need to dust yourself down and play it all over again, this time with a different set of sexual organs.

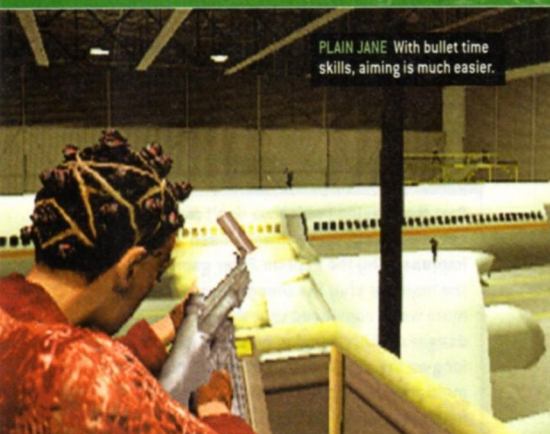
Besides that, we've seen more of the – we still can't believe they're in there – vampires, who appear to be

harder than frozen hard-boiled eggs, we've watched the agents bullet-dodging just like they do in the movie, and we've reduced an extremely familiar-looking lobby area to rubble during a 16-man shootout. We've seen things we can't talk about, things we can't remember, and things so good that we openly wept.

Thankfully the driving sections are already playing a little better, though it still appears to be the case that you're intended to treat these passages more as a respite from the relentless stream of kung-fu than anything else. Good fun, just not quite as good or quite as enjoyable as the rest of the game. Anyway, the next time you'll hear us gassing on about *Enter the Matrix* will be during our full review next month. Only PSW will tell you truth about what goes on when you venture down the rabbit-hole and start high-kicking the bunnies. Don't trust anyone else.

■ TYPE: Action ■ PUBLISHER: Infogrames
■ LAST PREVIEW: PSW 11 ■ ETA: May '16

/ YOU'LL NEED TO DUST YOURSELF DOWN AND PLAY ALL OVER AGAIN, THIS TIME WITH A DIFFERENT SET OF SEXUAL ORGANS /



PLAIN JANE With bullet time skills, aiming is much easier.



DOUBLE CROSS When humanity's liberated, Ghost can do yoga.



BUST THA 5-0 It's okay cos they aren't really cops. Is that right?

MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER

INTERSTELLAR CRIMINAL CHASING, AND NOT A MEMBER OF THE FETT CLAN IN SIGHT.

Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter isn't based on any sort of film, which makes it a rarity up there with Penny Black stamps and editions of *SMTV* where Atomic Kitten don't show their stupid, sly, over-made-up faces. Ahem. Where were we? Ah yes. In a future filled with space travel and alien scum, the titular Mace Griffin is trying to clear his name of the murder of his ex-army comrades.

In case you missed our issue 10 preview, you'll need to know that this involves a unique mix of shooting and piloting a range of different craft as part of your felon-

finding missions. This includes everything from bodyguard work for alien warlords to tracking down 'space cattle' rustlers. The unique thing about it being that you'll move seamlessly from standing at the deck of your ship in space fights to shooting down alien hordes when they invade your vessel. The latest news is that bull-necked rocker-cum-stand-up-comedian-cum-actor Henry Rollins will do the voice acting for the bounty boy. Rollins was in *Heat* and *Jackass: The Movie*, so he should be able to pull off the role of bad-boy space assassin pretty well. He's got this and *Bad Boys II* out this year; he must be very proud. Excuse me while I return to sending out prizes.

■ TYPE: Shooter ■ PUBLISHER: Vivendi
■ LAST PREVIEW: PSW 11 ■ ETA: June



HELLO BIG BOY I've got a thermal detonator! Aargh! Copyright alert!



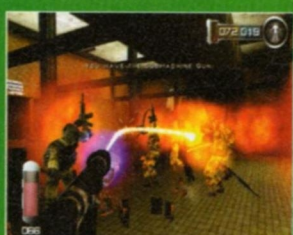
HIGH HAT Tall helmet hides thin alien face. Kill him with guns!



XENO-SLOB Aliens are so lazy. Poke him to wake up the loser.



BLAST CORPS How is this ruckus going to get your bounty? Cool it.



DIE HARD: VENDETTA

AN IMMORTAL FRANCHISE RETURNS

A pained sometime-cop more than slightly partial to destruction and mayhem is the gamer's ideal protagonist. Bit of blam here, some dealing smack out there – on paper it is invariably a winner. And how *Die Hard: Vendetta* strives to be this sort of game! Certainly, any first-person shooter that starts you off with your fists sticking out of the bottom of the screen obviously has one thing in mind – and it's not going to involve arts and crafts.

While *Vendetta*, like everyone's favourite alco John McClane, won't win any beauty contests (although, I would settle for a bit of Demi in her prime – damn you *Striptease*, damn you), strutting round, crashing crim parties and reprimanding 'badass' style has an attraction few can resist. The latest code we've been playing does milk the preceding McClane rep well, as you chat to police (including Carl Winslow from *Family Matters*) laying siege to a felon-infested mansion. Whether the developers can convert this promising scenario development into long-term gameplay brilliance is still to be revealed. Considering the game is a GameCube port, we had better hope that the developers can remind the player at every turn that you are indeed John McClane, because we'll show you vendetta if we have to look at another dirty blurred texture.

■ TYPE: Shooter ■ PUBLISHER: Vivendi
■ LAST PREVIEW: PSW 10 ■ ETA: June



BIG UP TOP, SPLIT AT THE BOTTOM
And not a *Divas* slogan in sight.

GameCube

Xbox

PC

PlayStation 2

Game Boy Advance

PSP

**YOUR GUIDE TO THE
FUTURE OF GAMING
AND BEYOND!**

HYPER

AUSTRALIA'S GAMING AUTHORITY

REVIEWS

ATTENTION! THIS SECTION CONTAINS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO DECIDE WHAT TO BUY, AND WHAT TO LEAVE ALONE.

THIS MONTH!

IT ALMOST HAPPENED. WE ALMOST DELVED DOWN into the realm of 'open-mindedness'. Thankfully, the real world regained its hold, and this month's Game of the Month award did not go to the kiddie-wannabe *Dark Chronicle*. Instead, it's *NBA Street Vol 2*, jinking its way down the court, hurling the pill skywards

before a breathtaking alley-oop into the annals of mild recognition. *Silent Hill 3* was unlucky this issue to claim only a 'must buy' - it is definitely the most immediately impressive game this month. Sadly, it's an experience, graphical splendour or not, that we have enjoyed more than a couple of times before.



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THE SCORING SYSTEM

PSW RATINGS

THE PSW SCORING SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO MAKE ALL YOUR GAMES PURCHASING DECISIONS SIMPLE. HERE'S HOW TO TRANSLATE THOSE NUMBERS INTO DEFINITIVE ADJECTIVES.

10/10	ESSENTIAL
9/10	BRILLIANT
8/10	GREAT
7/10	GOOD
6/10	DECENT
5/10	AVERAGE
4/10	POOR
3/10	BAD
2/10	BLOODY RUBBISH
1/10	AVOID AT ALL COSTS



PSW GAME OF THE MONTH

The Game of the Month Award is precisely what it says, the title that in PSW's opinion is the essential purchase of the month. In the event of multiple games receiving the same score, we simply pick the one we think is the must-have option if you can only afford one game a month. Go and buy it now. Run!

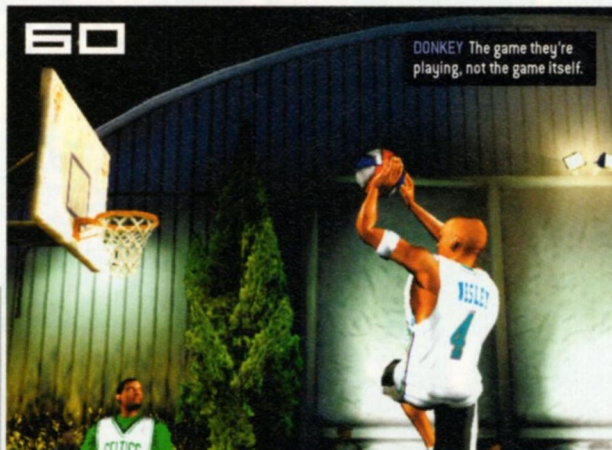


PSW MUST BUY

Typically awarded to games that score 8/10 or above, representing one of the best in its genre. So if you're a fan of this particular type of game, then you'll be more than happy with this purchase. Simply, if you like this type of game, you 'must buy'. Clever eh?



64



60

DONKEY The game they're playing, not the game itself.



54

AARGH! I was sure that GotM award was mine!



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PS2 NEW RELEASES

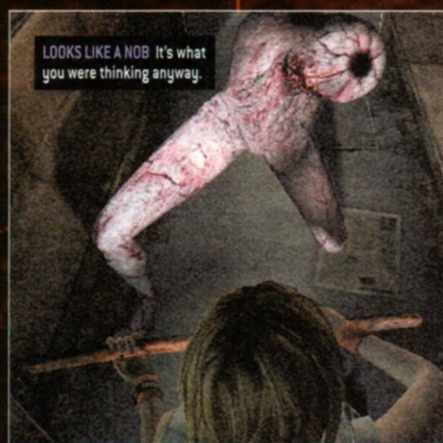
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- 73 BLOOD RAYNE



OH BOY These slimy foes were once kids. Bleurgh.



PASS THE BUCKET In fact, don't, it's probably vile.



LOOKS LIKE A NOB It's what you were thinking anyway.

SILENT HILL 3



NOW HERE'S A GIRL WITH A CULT FOLLOWING. A WHOLE CULT, FOLLOWING AT A DISTANCE, TO BE EXACT. WELCOME BACK TO AMERICA'S WORST TOWN. IT'S LIKE YOU NEVER LEFT...

TYPE	SURVIVAL HORROR
PLAYERS	1
OUT	JUNE 13
PUBLISHER	ATARI
PRICE	\$109.95
DEVELOPER	KONAMI
SEE IT ON DVD	
Nasty flesh-beasts Lovely, lovely Heather Horrible atmosphere	

SOME TOWNS JUST DON'T HAVE good reputations. Stephen King's Castle Rock, for example.

Amityville. Buffy the Vampire Slayer's Sunnydale. And that little place by the shores of Toluca Lake called Silent Hill. We've been there twice before, and it all ended in fountains of blood, lakes of tears and plenty of locked doors. But now we're going back for a third time. Are we mad? If we're not now, we soon will be. Because things haven't got any nicer since the last time.

Heather Mason is our new heroine. A spunky teen with a loud mouth and disrespect for authority figures, Heather has a far darker destiny than most cookie-cutter game gals with attitude. It all begins when she wakes from the obligatory troubled dream to find her world's gone crazy in a 'visit to the abattoir' sort of way, and the key to it all lies in Silent Hill. She's a hottie, in a kind of whey-faced way. But you won't exactly be ogling her. Mind you, if it's flesh you want, Silent Hill's got plenty of that...

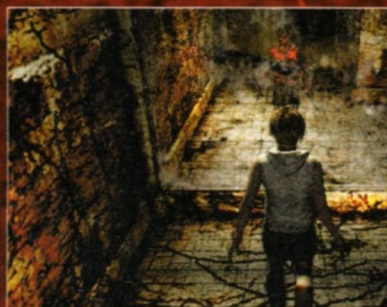
GRUESOMELY GOOD

The plot is as convoluted as we've come to expect from the series. We won't give too much away, (unless you read the Spoilers Ahead panel, which will give you a few clues), but it all begins with Heather meeting a man who claims

to have been hired to find her. A couple of other decidedly odd folk show up to make her life hell, and as you progress you'll get deeper into the Otherworld, Silent Hill's dark reflection where the monsters rule and the good citizens have been reduced to walking munchies for the hellspawn. As for graphics, well, how long have you got? *Silent Hill 3* not only represents a big improvement from the (hot-looking) previous game, it's also one of the best-looking games on PlayStation 2, period. The shots plastered over these pages don't do it justice, either, because you can't see it moving. Time to haul out our DVD and gaze on its dark majesty, then. It shows that you can still push the envelope of just how good a PS2 game can look, although we reckon it's more about crafty tricks than putting more stuff on screen.



HOW'S IT HANGING? Collect blood from this man to make a sacrifice. Oh, that's so pleasant.



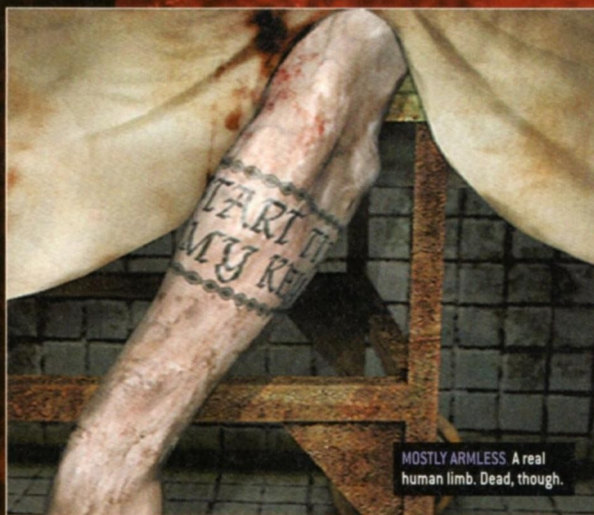
MIRROR MIRROR Heather's bad hair day just got worse.



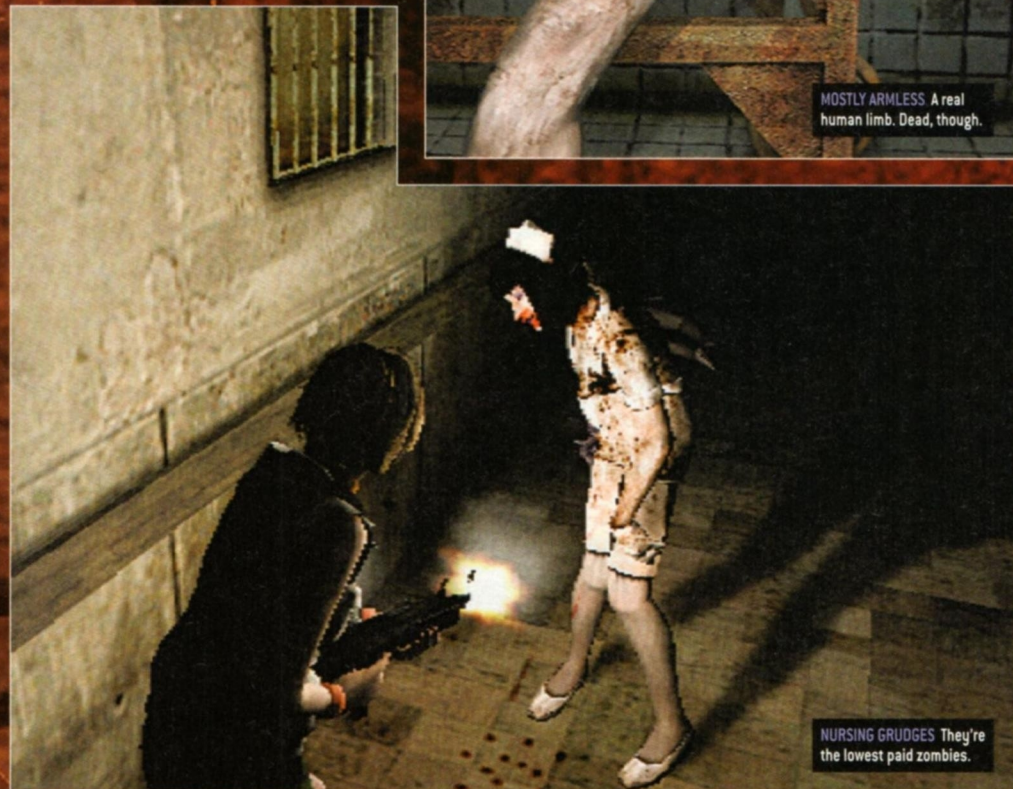
ROTTEN TO THE CORE Like the apple at the bottom of the bowl.



LOATHE LETTER "Dear Heather. You will die. Love The Monsters."



MOSTLY ARMLESS A real human limb. Dead, though.



NURSING GRUDGES They're the lowest paid zombies.

Everything has been constructed to just one end – to make you forget you're just playing a game. Hence no power bars, bullet counter or level map on the main screen; in fact, nothing to clutter the action. But it goes further than that. Thanks to the cunning design of the game, where you can look around but never get too close to any one item, it's almost impossible to tell that everything's made out of polygons. Sure, it looks computer-generated – we're not quite at the photo-realistic stage yet – but no item ever looks simplified, or out of place.

LOADS OF RUBBISH

You've got to hand it to the designers – you enter a room full of crap and you're still impressed with the way everything looks. From a shop completely filled with souvenirs to the



TRANNNY-KENSTEIN It's wearing some sort of skirt. Oooh-kay....

/ MOUTHS ARE ANIMATED SO WELL YOU CAN ALMOST LIP-READ /

padding cell of an asylum, from the echoing platforms of a deserted underground station to the gruesome interior of a Satanic chapel, everything is perfect. The details start tricking your subconscious into thinking this is more than a game. It's the way the much-improved shadows fall on you as you move past a lamp or a turning in a corridor that's blacker than black. The way the textures of rust and carpet look just right, instead of digital pictures plastered onto simple models. The way there's no let-up in the level of detail, whether you're staring at a junk-strewn room or a swaying flesh-monster. Every corner of this world has been drawn with the utmost taste and precision. We honestly can't think of a creature or feature that hasn't been rendered chillingly well. Like in *Silent Hill 2*, you have the option to turn off the annoying grainy



OH THE HORROR "I lost a new blue bird. WHY LORD, WHY?"

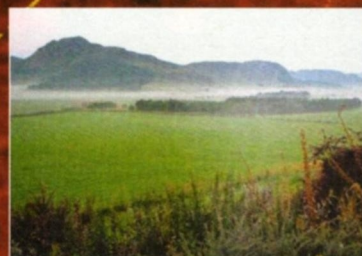
HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST!

WE PIT SILENT HILL 3'S FOG AGAINST THE WORLD'S MISTIEST PLACES.



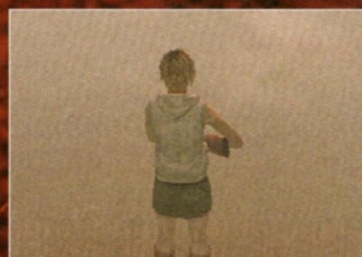
>> THE UK'S TOP OF THE POPS

Dry ice causes some fogging, but hides atrocious Britpop miming and one hit wonders.



>> SCOTLAND

Foggy Scotland has the world's shortest draw distance – a mere 50 feet. That's shoddy.



>> SILENT HILL 3

An undoctored *Silent Hill 3* shot. Nothing can compete with this level of gloom. Nice!

filter that tries to make everything look even more real, but instead makes it look like it's being beamed to you via a transmitter in Broken Hill during a violent thunderstorm. We'll take our horror static-free, thank you very much.

We've also been blessed with the very latest in digital acting, thanks to a respectable amount of cut-scenes that never get that intrusive – you always want to learn more about what the hell's going on. It's not all perfect. The dialogue is overloaded with mystical babble, and there's still that annoying pause between speakers that really gets our sacrificial goat. Occasionally when people are speaking, they appear to be subject to some kind of bizarre facial tics. In other words, all the sort of problems that occur when you're watching video game cut-scenes. But something's changed. Rather than having feeble muppet-gobs that open and shut while the voices speak, mouths are animated so well you can almost lip-read. Faces aren't just expressionless masks any more. Instead, they register subtle changes and reactions. Fear, scorn, anger, reassurance and contempt. It's not like watching real people act, of course.

REVIEW

SILENT HILL 3



FINAL CUT A real corpse. In a fake ghost house. Eerie.



FACE OFF This holds the key to a Silent Hill puzzle.



FEMME FATALE When the ladies meet, it's carnage.



GOOD LOOKING Heather's head turns towards clues.



ROUND ROUND BABY An evil carousel. You scared?

No, it's like watching puppets brought to life. Eerie? Sometimes. But that's what you buy the *Silent Hill* games for, isn't it?

HILL OF BEINGS

If you've played *Silent Hill 2*, you'll know what sort of monsters to expect on your trip. If you haven't... oh boy. Everyone knows that these days, fighting the old-fashioned undead is about as scary as a trip to Woolworths for cut-price Easter eggs. So what we have here is the re-invention of the zombie. Monsters in *Silent Hill* aren't made of rotting flesh. Instead, they have the bile-inducing consistency of a freshly opened wound. Everything's sticky, slick with

/ MONSTERS IN SILENT HILL HAVE THE BILE-INDUCING CONSISTENCY OF A FRESHLY OPENED WOUND /

blood and most of all, oddly formless. The biggest monsters tend to be the ones with the least shape to them. You can sometimes make out arms and legs, but hands are usually totally gone, or bound up. It's the human body transmogrified into meat. Nasty.

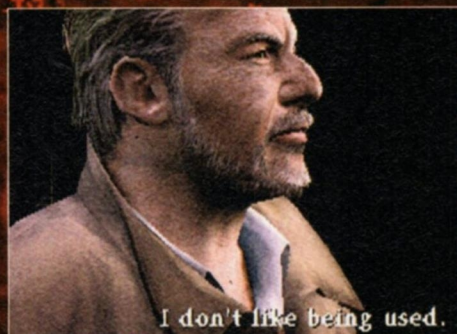
The only difference is that this time, there's more of them. Semi-mummified dogs with faces split vertically down the middle rush at you to knock you over. The melty nurses from *Silent Hill 2* make a comeback, in a slightly different form; hunched and sinister. But the main monster is the almost indescribable shambling hulk with the body of a woman, arms the size of carcasses and a head made of... well, it's difficult to say.

It's shaped like a tube or horn (or maybe just a penis, come to think of it... yes, that's it, a penis, ugh...). Like most of the monsters that hang round *Silent Hill*, it never stops snuffling, shaking and sniffing, as if it's caught in perpetual spasm. Then there's the spider-fly-corpse things that hang in the air, coming down to whip you with their arm-blades. They're the worst possible combination of human and insect, and when you bring the patented *Silent Hill* stomp on their dying bodies, they'll squeal and writhe like a taxidermist's nightmare. Killing them is fully as gruesome as them killing you.

Have we mentioned the vomit-inducing fat blubber-corpses that deflate when you kill them? Or the man-creatures with machetes for hands? Or the sparse but spectacular boss battles? Well, they're all in there too. There are only about half a dozen fights that can be called boss battles at most, and that's stretching it. But they'll bring you face to face with some truly horrific bad guys/gals/things, from a giant sandworm to an aquatic zombie and supernatural hell-spawn. What's worse, *Silent Hill* is filled with flesh-creations that aren't even monsters. Strung up all over the place are semi-

WARNING: SPOILERS AHEAD!

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW THE STORY, LOOK AWAY RIGHT NOW.



I don't like being used.

Private dick Douglas has been hired to find Heather. Could she be subconsciously controlling the switch to the Otherworld? The plot of the very first *Silent Hill* game might give you some clues, so start boning up on your classics.



I wish only for the salvation of Mankind.

Lovely Claudia here is a sinister acolyte of a cult that is trying to resurrect God in the form of a new-born baby. But is it God or... something else? Something more evil? Well what do you think? This isn't *Teletubbies*, you know.



I saw the way he hit you, kicked you, made you cry.

This fella Vincent is mad as an elk, and belongs to the same church as Claudia, but he's working to different ends. He's also evil – you can see it in his eyes. Want to know what he wants? You'll have to play... we're not giving it away.



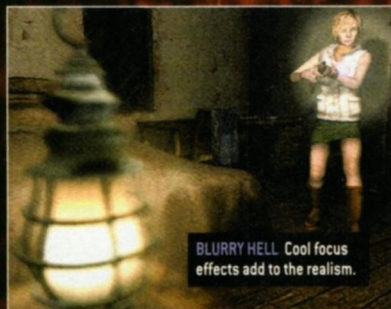
FUNNY BUNNY Who's inside the costume? A dead man.



PLAYING HANGMAN This is not quite what you think.



CHURCH LADY But this is no normal house of God.



BLURRY HELL Cool focus effects add to the realism.



FATBOY GRIM These lady bloaters deflate on death.

living statues of quivering people-meat. Monuments to pain. Ungodly beings tethered, chained or hanging from the ceiling dripping gore. It's like your grandma's birthday party in there, so it is.

Mind you, there are some awfully nasty set-pieces. We'll give you a flavour with just one, midway through the game. Here goes – at one point, you enter a dark, dingy room with a giant mirror covering one wall. Something strange is happening to the floor in the mirror room... it seems to be covered in blood. As you watch – and this isn't a cut-scene, it's part of the real time action – the blood flows somehow from the mirror image through a dirty sink in the corner, and slowly, inexorably onto the floor beneath your feet. And as the floor gets bloodier and bloodier, your reflection is changing. Becoming more red. Less skin. More... fleshy. And finally, as the floor is completely covered in gore, your reflection stops moving and stands there, staring at you. We don't want to give too much away, but rest assured that it's a pointer to a climactic battle later on.

Even the team behind all these monsters don't expect you to destroy them with your bare

hands, although we wouldn't be completely surprised if they did, the sickos. Starting off with a teensy knife, you'll soon progress to a fast but not terribly useful handgun. Pretty soon you'll get hold of an iron bar. From here on, it gets much more intense, with samurai swords and a giant flail brought into the mix. The shotgun is our weapon of choice, though. One shot at close range does far more damage, and it's not that slow-loading either. If you can find the stun gun, you'll have fun, and a silencer means shooting will attract less attention from other monsters, although at a cost to the damage you inflict.

BANG, BANG, YOU'RE DEAD... ARE YOU?

The newest addition to the *Silent Hill* armoury is the machine gun. A split-second of high-intensity fire from this baby, and the hardest shambler is lying on the floor in pieces. It's hardly surprising that you're not exactly showered with bullets for it. We were expecting a little more action-oriented action this time round, but we've been fooled by the hype. Apart from this tasty bit of kit, *Silent Hill 3* is really no more fight-centred than the last game, and monsters can often be avoided simply by

/ THE EMPHASIS IS ON SMALL-TOWN EVIL AND WEIRD MEAT-PUPPETS /

running past them as easily as killing them. As there's no gameplay bonus for getting rid of them, the reason you'll be killing them most of the time is simply to get them off your screen and stop the hideous shrieking that accompanies them. And guess what? You never have enough bullets. You mean you aren't surprised by this?

If all this is sounding uncomfortably familiar, we wouldn't be shocked at all. Not only is *Silent Hill 3* very similar to the second game, it's strangely lacking in shocks. Weird events: plenty. Horrific carved-up dead people: more than you'd believe. But actual moments that will make you jump: virtually none. Maybe it's because everything pans out how we expected it to. With the emphasis on small-town evil and weird meat-puppets, it's more David Cronenberg-style weirdness than *Evil Dead* gore.



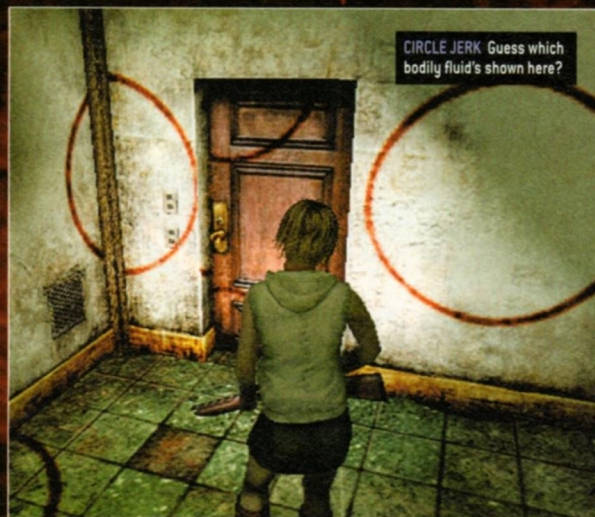
STATUE RISK Theme park models... dead spooky.



WHAT THE...? Later in the game, you'll encounter mould-encrusted dudes like this. Great effects.



WALLS HAVE FEARS Blood crawls across these walls.



CIRCLE JERK Guess which bodily fluid's shown here?



CELL DAMAGE Yet another room to explore. Oh, the horror.

/ HEAR THE HISS OF THE RADIO, THE SWELL OF THE MUSIC AND THE INSANE BURBLE OF A DEMON CLOSING IN /

What it does have is a continual aura of danger. Every time you enter a room, the first thing you see is Heather. You'll have to press a button to pan the camera around and confront whatever's in the room, or walk forward blindly into the dark. Of course, you'll know if the monsters are around because of the static from your radio, but you won't know just what you're about to see. Most of the time though, what you see is literally trash. This is when *Silent Hill 3* seems to be its own worst enemy. People have obviously spent ages creating every room in stunning detail – but nine out of ten rooms are decayed and rubbish-strewn. In real life, you'd call most of these rooms empty, although they usually hide clues, items or secrets. The all-covering fog is back when you're wandering

around Silent Hill (see the Haven't The Foggiest panel), but it's a tiny part of the game and you won't be outside for very long anyway. Fine with us, because it was one of *Silent Hill 2*'s sore points. Still, you have to admire the wispy fog effects all the same, even if you can't see anything else.

PET (SEMETARY) SOUNDS

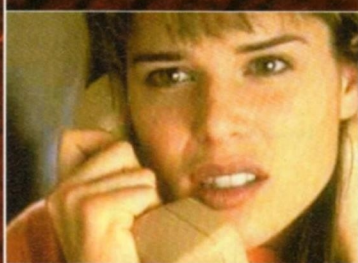
To get the most freaked out by *Silent Hill 3*, you'll have to turn up the volume. Stepping into a new, darkened space isn't half as scary unless you can hear the hiss of your radio, the swell of the music and the insane burble of a demon closing in. Or worse, when you step through a door and all you can hear is an eerie silence, broken by whispers from far away and the stretch of an

unsettling darkness in front of you. Just like before, your radio is your proximity meter, crackling louder as the beasts shamble into your torch beam. During a fight, the background music swells up hellishly, mimicking the adrenaline coursing through Heather's veins. Once the beasts are dead, there's an ominous second while the music continues, and you wonder with a sinking heart where the other fiends are... before it sinks back down into background noise, and you give a sigh of relief as you realise the room is clear.

Perhaps the biggest service the audio provides is the normal, everyday sounds you make as you explore. Every one of them is faultless, from the tramp of your feet across a metal grille to the (very familiar) rattle of a

DÉ JÀ DEAD

RECOGNISE THIS LOT? SILENT HILL 3 NICKS SOME CLASSIC HORROR THEMES.



>> SCREAM

Sassy female teen heroine inadvertently caught in the middle of small-town terror...



>> DAWN OF THE DEAD

Trapped in a shopping mall by quivering undead monsters intent on her flesh...

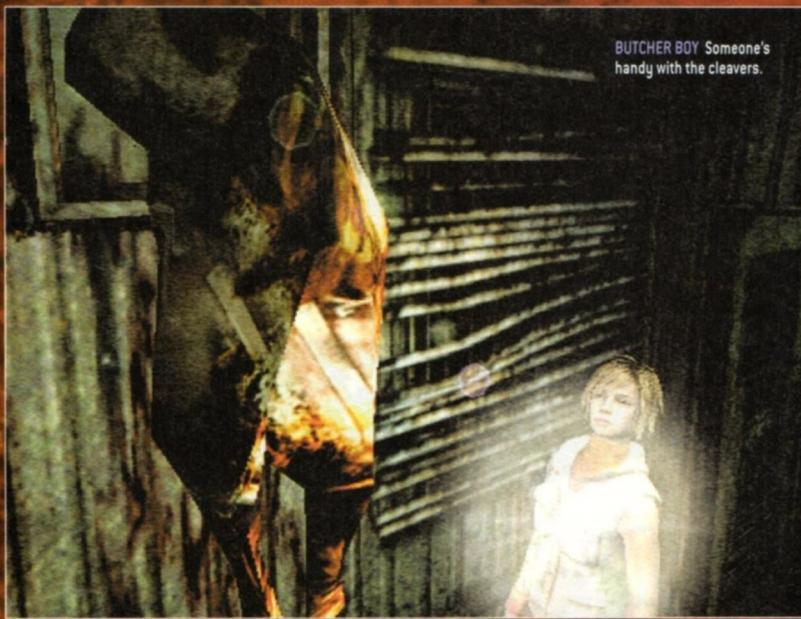


>> THE FOG

Terrorised by zombies coming out of a ripe pea-souper. Nah, it's all co-incidence...



DOG'S BREAKFAST Look at the detail – then kill Rover.



BUTCHER BOY Someone's handy with the cleavers.

locked door, or the sinister buzz of an industrial Otherworld lift as it ferries you to another unknown basement. Just like the exemplary graphics, the sound takes the game to the next level, grabbing you and pushing you right into the middle of the action.

SUTURE IMPERFECT

Now that's the good stuff. But it's not all dandy, sadly. *Silent Hill 3* can be both frustrating and dull, and what's worse it's frustrating and dull in exactly the same way that its predecessor was. Puzzles are exactly the same type of thing that we've seen a bazillion times before in survival horror games. There's an odd obstacle, like a ladder you can't reach or a door that has to be forced open. Somewhere, usually as far away from the obstacle as you can get, is an item or two that need to be collected to get past it.

You soon get into the habit of methodically checking every door and pressing X around every surface, just to check you haven't missed a vital item. Because if you have, there's no possible way around it. You'll simply have to backtrack through the labyrinthine corridors and search again. Heather's fabulous turny head will indicate where vital clues are by looking in the right direction, but it's still easy to miss. Items aren't too hard to find, but some of the puzzles are as dumb as they always are in survival horror games. We can forgive Heather's complete lack of climbing skills – she is a girl, after all – but not her inability to walk over raised objects

that present zero challenge to anyone with both legs functioning.

And then there's the doors. Ah, the doors. We counted in the region of 90 doors in the hospital alone, a large part of the game's mid-section (and yes, it's Brookhaven Hospital again, just like in the second game. My pills, nurse!). So 90 doors then, most of which are locked – you'll have to check most of them to see whether they open or not. And that's not including the fact that once you've explored it all, you'll be drawn into the sticky Otherworld and have to go through the exact same layout again, door by door. We're not arguing that it's been mindlessly stretched out, by any means. The switch to Otherworld isn't merely to prolong the boredom of exploration, it's to ramp up the terror. But the whole game just isn't that long, and experienced horrorheads will find probably themselves at a premature climax. Choosing easy mode will walk you through the game with hardly a monster in sight as well, so stay away if you want your money's worth.

So *Silent Hill 3* is going to inflame opinion. Some will love what it does so well, whereas others just won't see the point at all in re-enacting a drama they've become far too

STRETCHER PANIC There're beds everywhere. Why?



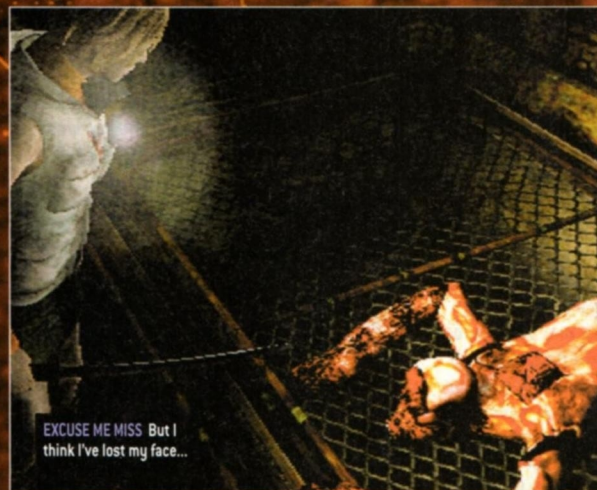
/ IT'S A QUALITY SLICE OF GAMING AND ONE OF THE MOST UNSETTLING THINGS YOU'LL PLAY /

familiar with. Some will value another chapter in the increasingly deep and deranged *Silent Hill* story, but others will be unimpressed with the generally cosmetic nature of the changes since the last offering. Love it or hate it, it's a quality slice of gaming and one of the most unsettling things you'll play all year. All this goes with a word of warning – if they try and get us back to *Silent Hill* for a fourth time, we'll be expecting a lot of changes. And so should you. If this is the last *Silent Hill* title, then so be it. We've had a lovely stay, cheers, but it's probably time for the clever people who invented this little town of horrors to get on with something new, different and even more disgustingly weird.

/ JOFF BROWN



BEAT HIM OFF There's no way he's getting a kiss tonight.



EXCUSE ME MISS But I think I've lost my face...

VERDICT

PSW

UPPERS

- Frighteningly good-looking
- Intriguing plot
- Excellent action
- Utterly evil

DOWNERS

- Incomprehensible story
- Familiar puzzles
- Similar monsters
- Same old, same old...

GRAPHICS - Everything looks real, from flesh to trash

9

SOUND - Tasty effects and themes. In a word... sound

9

LIFESPAN - Pretty short. Multiple endings, but that's it

6

OVERALL SCORE

Stunning looks and mindbending plot mean this is something of a PS2 classic. Haters will find it all very samey, but there's no denying its ultra-high-quality horror nonetheless.

8



BALL BRAWL Getting hold of the ball is tougher than you think.



TRICK STYLE You'll need to use every trick in the book to win.



MIDNIGHT BALLER These guys are at it morning, noon and night.



SHANE ON YOU Ooh! Such hard hitting street nicknames you have!

The Opposition:
Shane
Simone
Quentin



TALL TALES Why is this very, very tall man a great baller? Who knows?

NBA STREET VOL 2



YEAH, YOU'RE GONNA TURN THE PAGE BECAUSE IT'S BASKETBALL. DON'T! LOOK AT THE SCORE AND THE SCREENS. YOU'LL THANK US LATER.

TYPE	BASKETBALL
PLAYERS	1-4
OUT	NOW
PUBLISHER	EA SPORTS
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	EA SPORTS BIG
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Mad-a-licious dunks / Def ball tricks / Phat Street Legends	

IT SEEMS LIKE A MONTH DOESN'T

go by at the moment without us giving EA Sports Big another big up.

After the rather stunning knockabout hip hop wrestling game *Def Jam Vendetta*, we now have the rather stunning knockabout hip hop basketball game *NBA Street Vol 2*. But don't be fooled. *Street* is a very different beast from *Vendetta*. There're only a couple of things the two games have in common: one, they're bastardised, free-flowing street versions of the sports, and two, they're both rockin'. Instead of going to the bother of replicating proper basketball, this is all about the three-on-three version of the game. The only rules are "score one for a short range, two for a long-distance shot" and "be cool".

This is how *NBA Street Vol 2* plays: you sit down and learn the controls. You play your first few games. Soon enough you'll win, but you'll be left with a peculiar, hollow feeling inside. Why? Cos you don't got game, that's why. You won, but you didn't do it in style. So next time, you fire it up a little. You take some shots from further out, you do a bit of fancy tricking as you approach the hoop. Your style gets a little wilder, and your dunks get a little harder. In short, you get your flow on. And you build up your power bar until

suddenly, everything's got a little funky and the ball's trailing stars across the court. With the perfect set-up, you execute a move involving all three players, demolishing the defence and slamming the ball through the hoop. Now that's what we're talking about. This is because *NBA Street Vol 2* isn't a rules-laden, stop-and-start sim. It's a creative interpretation of street basketball. Your aim is to get the ball into the net in the wickedest way possible. And that's it.

I WISH I WAS A LITTLE BIT TALLER

Any other game would have been happy to exist without the official NBA license, and just create a knocked-off 'wild' version of the street sport. Not

when it's made by EA Sports Big, though. Not only are there a ton of made-up three-on-three players, but – get this – 170 NBA stars are packed in here too. Most names don't mean much to us Aussies, we know, but there's still some names to conjure with. How about Kobe Bryant? Yeah. Magic Johnson? Yeah. Michael Jordan? Hell yeah. Three different versions of Mike in fact, from his early years to his later well-rounded Wizards days. Although you can't play real pro basketball with them, you can have some amazing games on the street courts. These rangy guys can traverse the tarmac in a single bound, and hammer shots home from the opposite hoop.



GHETTO FABULOUS The street courts are basic, but groovy.



FLYING DUNKSMAN It's like some kind of urban ballet. For men.



If the first *NBA Street* was a training shoe, it would have been an Nike Air Jordan. Vol 2, on the other hand, is a Converse All-Star of a title. What we mean is that there's a pleasing, subliminal seventies vibe going on here, a world away from the violence usually associated with ghetto games (and certainly present in *Def Jam Vendetta*). It generates a kind of relaxed, at-peace sensation that only comes from playing sports with mates, even if you put your heart and soul into it, even if it's a manic game. It's a sense that everything's all right with the world, well at least in the hood. This is reflected in the sometimes-annoying, always enthusiastic MCing commentary. Sure, it gets repetitive, but then

we've never played a sports game where it doesn't. It fits in perfectly with the tempo of each match anyway.

KICK OUT THE SLAMS

Players from the first game might remember the gamebreakers, a typical piece of EA Sports Big tomfoolery. Start maxing out your bar by pulling off combos of tricks, ducking past defenders and weaving up to the hoop. Once you're into the rhythm of it all, you can start trying for fancy dunks. This'll raise your bar even further and, eventually, you'll get the opportunity to set off a big set-piece move which raises your score and steals points from the other team. If you're extra

/ THE VIBE GENERATES A FEELING THAT EVERYTHING'S ALRIGHT IN THE WORLD, WELL AT LEAST IN THE HOOD /

brave, you can now bank your gamebreaker and try for a second one, enabling a second, even more stunning move – a bit like an all-powerful über-move from *SSX Tricky*, in fact. Everything takes on a strange, sepia tone. The music speeds up. The ball starts trailing stars and stripes, like it's part of a Independence Day parade. And when you approach the hoop and slam it in, you'll execute an ultra-special move that can't be blocked, no matter what. Trouble is, if the other player works out what you're up to, he can steal your gamebreaker when he gets his own, making all that effort meaningless. This is all good stuff, because gamebreakers are just powerful enough to change the course of play but not bend it out of shape entirely. It's another excellent addition to the game, making everything that little bit more manic and thrilling.

There are two main ways to play. *NBA Challenge* is all about taking on the sport's stars over different regions of the US. After you've defeated all the teams on a street court in one region, you'll take on an all-star regional team just to prove how wickedly-wack you are. This is where the action's at its most impressive, if not the most frenetic. It's a good way to get into the game, and because the ballers are just so, so good, you'll always feel in control. But it's



DIME STAR The girls are shorter, but more agile than the blokes.

FLASH JORDAN The Bull's number 23's not here. Will she do?



RUNNING RINGS The superglue ball race is just at the beginning.



A COUPLE OF GUYS UP TO NO GOOD Playing B-Ball in the hood.



IN AN ALLEY-DOOP THE ROAD Lived this basketball court.



WESLEY STRIKES The Street Legends have unique skills.

HIT OR MYTH

THIS IS HOW 'BE A LEGEND' MODE PLAYS OUT



1/ Create your player, complete with stats. The taller they are, the less skill they'll have, just to keep it fair. Try to avoid hair like this.



2/ You'll start with a couple of semi-conscious street halfwits on your team. Mind you, you're no Kobe Bryant yourself to begin with.



3/ Increase your stats through winning, and steal a team member to help out. We'll take the guy in the cap, please. No, the other one.

/ ROUNDED MEANS 'EQUAL ABILITY IN ALL AREAS', NOT ROUNDED LIKE MAGDA SZUBANSKI /

> more of a bonus mode, albeit a long-lasting one. The real action is in Be A Legend, the full-on street career mode.

LEGENDARY HEROES

Be a Legend is the game's core career mode, which lets you create a player and start a street team, building up your rep and your skills as you go. The idea is that you take a no-good street creation of your own and increase his or her basketball powers through playing against other street teams. Just like real stars, you'll also discard your rubbish old mates in favour of high-powered new ones with extra skills. Nobody's here to tell you to keep it real though, so it's okay.

As well as the everyday heroes you'll meet on the court, you'll get to meet the street legends. These people are crazy concoctions. Stretch Monroe is back from the first game, an afro'd-up old gent who's spider-skinny and pulls off the crazy dunks. Biggie Little is a snoot-nosed, four-foot-high brat who does cartwheels on the court, and there's a handful more like lady player Dime and the fearsomely tall Osmosis who you'll meet as you work through the game. They're kind of the end-of-level bosses of *NBA Street Vol 2*, only appearing at the end of street tournaments.

Just like all the other characters you meet on the court in Be A Legend mode, if you beat the Street Legends they can join your team. This

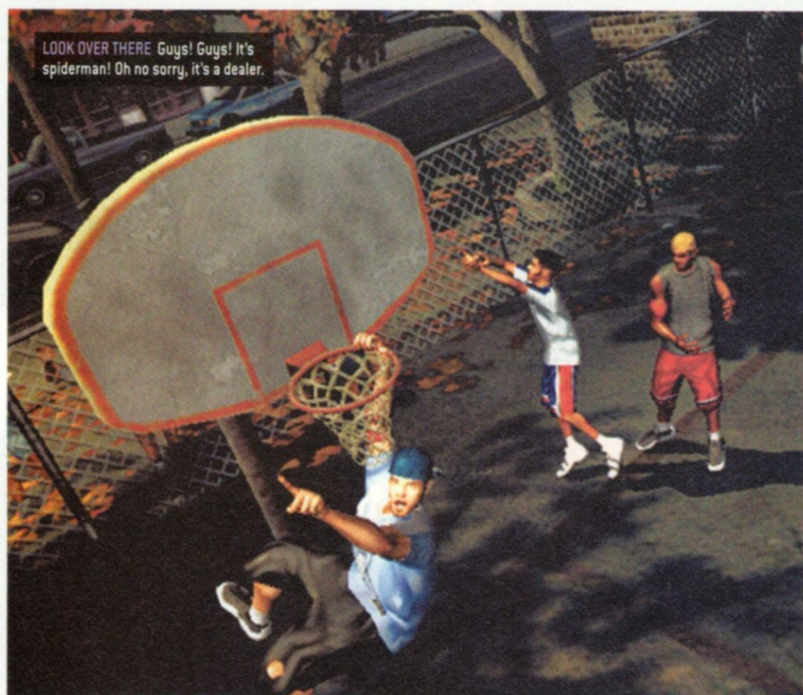
means that you'll be constantly swapping two out of three ballers all the time, and it can lead to confusion in the court when everyone's dressed in casual sports gear and your team is new. With five players to pick from, you can always pick the guys with the right talent. Girl players, while short, often have the agility and aim that you need, so don't discount them. Even street legends, who have at least one ability maxed out, aren't always the best choice if there are more rounded players to select. Rounded meaning 'having equal ability in all areas', obviously... not rounded like Magda Szubanski. As well as normal one-off matches and tournaments, there's the odd (and slightly gimmicky) match where the rules are changed slightly. Only scoring through dunks is more difficult than it sounds, but playing by old-school rules didn't overly tax us. Probably because we weren't fully aware of what they were, thinking about it.



SLAM DUNK THA FUNK Make your scoring more stylish.



B-BALL STYLE Forget the rules, it's all about the moves.



LOOK OVER THERE Guys! Guys! It's spiderman! Oh no sorry, it's a dealer.



MIX IT UP Max out your bar by pulling off combos and tricks.

Play through Be A Legend and NBA Challenge and you'll be rewarded in lots of ways. Just about everything you do will win you advancement points, which can be used to buy all sorts of bonuses. Sensible players will use the points to buy stat upgrades for their street player, but ball nuts might spend a bit of cash buying better sneakers or superstar jerseys (that's singlets, for the uninitiated little mama's nerds). You can even unlock street courts for multiplayer games, but there's not much difference in play terms between one court and another.

BALL BOY ADVANCE

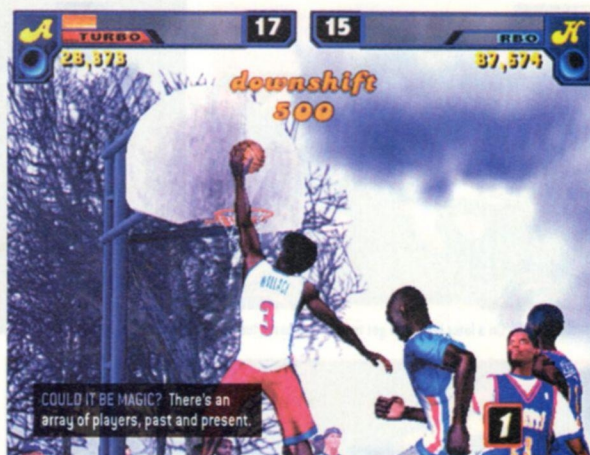
In fact, the difference between a lacklustre win and a soaring victory lies in using your turbo supply effectively. Turbo simulates that extra boost of effort that gets you higher blocks, funkier tricks and dunks instead of regular scoring. All this stuff gets you closer to the



STYLE CHALLENGE Choose players with the skills you need.

gamebreaker, as well as making you look dope. Hold down a shoulder button to use turbo, or multiple ones for extra fine tricks. Trouble is, your turbo runs down in a matter of seconds, meaning you'll have to budget for each move. Try to pull off loads of fancy evasion moves for a massive combo, and you'll find that one of three things happen: the ball's stolen off you, you run out of turbo or you end up holding onto the ball for too long and are penalised. It's a fine line, but it's one you'll be glad to walk.

Even with all the tricking extras, it's certainly not got the depth of a dedicated sports sim like *Pro Evolution Soccer 2*. It does have its fair share of other advanced tactics, though. Stick the ball to the player jumping in front of the basket, and they can catch it and 'alley-oop' it into the net. If you're good, you can pass the ball to a computer player then make a jump to the basket, alley-ooping it in yourself. With a bit of practice, you



COULD IT BE MAGIC? There's an array of players, past and present.



LEAVE ME ALONE Try out loads of evasion moves for a massive combo.

/ WITHIN A VERY SHORT TIME YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF IN THAT SPECIAL PLACE WHERE YOUR MIND RELAXES AND YOUR HANDS TAKE OVER /

can even rebound the ball from the backboard or off your opponent's head. It may not win you the game, but it sure will confuse your opponent and make you look like the don of basketball. Although there're some humorously wacky touches to the game, it's far less about the special effects than almost any other EA Sports Big title. The developer wants you to be impressed with fancy handling and fast tricks rather than extravagant sound and light displays. All of this is very much to its credit.

Best of all, though, it's got rhythm. Within a very short time, you'll find you're 'in the zone', that place where your mind leans back and your hands take over, blocking, tricking and shooting almost automatically. It's just made for kicking back with your mates. So, there you go. If we haven't convinced you, fine. Go back to your empty, basketball-bereft existence. Open a can of lager, read a paper, maybe watch telly. Even play other video games. But you're missing out on something pretty big.

/ JOFF BROWN



BALL BREAKER The game turns sepie in gamebreaker.



ON THE REBOUND Bounce the ball from the backboard.

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS		DOWNERS
- Gameplay never lets go		- It's still only basketball
- Understated street style		- Commentary's a bit much
- Tons of options and modes		- Lack of strips is confusing
- New four-player mode		- More legends would be great
GRAPHICS	- Stylish animation, startling detail, nice looks	9
SOUND	- Beats from the likes of Nate Dogg and Nelly	8
LIFESPAN	- Career mode's not huge, but will last for ages	8
OVERALL SCORE		9
Spend ten minutes on Street School mode learning to play, then drag in a mate and perfect your dunks, because this is simply one of the best sports games on PS2.		

REVIEW

X-MEN 2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE



GUNNING LATE On a later level you get to man this laser turret.



BROWN NOSE Wolverine can smell things when in brown-o-vision.



X-MEN 2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

LOGAN RUNS INTO TROUBLE IN AN UNINSPIRED MOVIE TIE-IN. MORE STEALTH SIR?

TYPE	ACTION
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	GENEPOOL
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Stealthy sneaking	
/ Hand-to-hand combat	
/ Strike attacks	

WOLVERINE'S REVENGE IS A

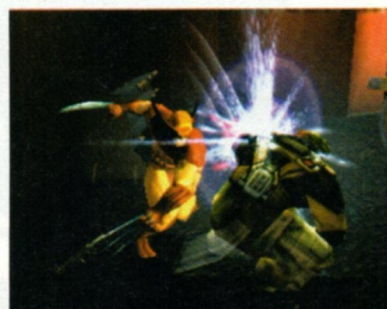
medium-sized stick of rock, through the centre of which the word 'ordinary' is printed in a food colouring of a fair-to-middling quality. The game begins with an undistinguished cut-sequence, voiced by rent-a-gob Mark Hamill, that details a generic – sorry genetic – experiment taking place within a slate grey military compound. It's a moment of spellbinding audio-visual mediocrity, one that perfectly captures the overwhelming averageness of this uniquely unexceptional action title.

Frankly, *Revenge* has everything you'd expect from a middle-of-the-road PS2 game. The graphics are largely drab with occasional bangs and flashes, the gameplay blends cockeyed stealth sections (you don't say?) with brainless combat, and the controls are dangerously imprecise. If you're looking for a reference point, *Wolverine's Revenge* is *Metal Gear Solid*'s spottier, less talented cousin.

The fact that it merits a full five marks means that we don't hate it all, however, so here are the few bits we like: Wolverine himself is a fairly versatile character, able to execute extravagant stealth kills and to use his extra-sensory abilities to detect enemy presence. We also admit to being impressed by the sheer mass of game on offer. The levels are huge and, provided you've got the stomach to accommodate a plate piled

high with generous servings of hard-boiled blandness, you'll soon recoup your cash outlay in gaming hours. It's also a title that understands the need to reward that player. *X-Men* enthusiasts can invest extracurricular evenings in collecting alternate costumes and taking part in a dog-tag challenge, 'borrowed' from *Metal Gear Solid 2*.

None of which was enough to significantly raise our enthusiasm levels, and by the time we'd reached the third act of six we became conscious of the fact that the only reason we were still playing *Wolverine's Revenge* was because we were being paid to do so. If cars ran on bodily waste, if every house had fresh milk on tap, if we had rich parents who could afford to keep us in cravats and luxury caravans we would've walked away right there and then and never looked back. As it was, we forced our way through the



TALON-TED Creep up on guards, then let fly with the claws.



BITCH FIGHT Quiet kills earn you dog tags, like *Metal Gear 2*.



BARRIER WHITE Defeat this chap by making him run into the fence



MEAT IS MARVELLOUS Logan hates vegetarians. So do we.

remaining sections of the game with tears of anger in our eyes, cursing the name of Stan Lee every inch of the way. It never got any better.

A large part of the problem lies with the stealth sections, which are unforgiving and terribly frustrating. Time and again you're told via your intercom to be quiet, to keep your head down, to lie low. Time and again you struggle to make it past the guards unnoticed on account of the fact that you can't tell where the sentries are posted or how far their field of vision stretches. Solid Snake has a handy pocket radar to help him through tight spots such as these. Wolverine isn't so lavishly equipped, and often you're left with no choice but to employ a trial and error method of attack, one that wears a bald patch in your



ELECTRIC DREAMS Here, you make robots fight other robots.



MEET THE BOSS The boss encounters are largely frustrating.

/ IT'LL LAST YOU AGES, PROVIDED YOU'VE GOT THE STOMACH FOR GENEROUS SERVINGS OF HARD-BOILED BLANDNESS /

patience faster than you can scream, "What the **** did I do with that ****ing receipt?" The remaining 70% of the game is occupied by hand-to-hand combat, which is fine until you realise that there's little more to the fighting than pounding the buttons and allowing the multiple enemies to queue up in order to receive their beating. Get in close to your enemy and you're sometimes given the chance to pull off a special Strike move. But that's the problem – it only works sometimes. On certain occasions you'll be within grabbing range of your opponent but the game won't let you cut loose. This small crack becomes a major rupture when you're fighting a boss who can only be defeated through a Strike attack and the control method continually lets you down. Grrr. In fact, double grrr.



ARMLESS This man is about to surrender. Kill him anyway.

ANATOMY OF A SUPERHERO

WOLVERINE DISSECTED AND EXPLAINED

1/ THE CLAWS – MADE FROM 100% STAINLESS ADAMANTIUM, WOLVERINE'S TALONS ARE HIS VERY BEST FRIEND. BY RETRACTING THEM DURING THE GAME, YOU CAN RECHARGE HIS ENERGY.

2/ THE SIDEBURNS – LOGAN JUST WOULDN'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT HIS JET BLACK MUTTON CHOPS. ON ANYONE ELSE THESE BURNS WOULD INSPIRE DERISION. HERE THEY INSTIL FEAR.

3/ THE NOSE – WOLVERINE'S EXTRA SENSORY ABILITIES MEAN HE CAN SMELL OUT TROUBLE LONG BEFORE HE SEES IT. ALWAYS REFER TO HIS BEAK WHEN ENTERING CROWDED AREAS.

4/ THE EYES – BEING AN X-MAN ENTITLES YOU TO SEE GUARDS LONG BEFORE THEY CAN SEE YOU. THE FACT THAT WOLVERINE CAN DETECT HEAT – AND THEREFORE FOOTPRINTS – ALSO HELPS.

5/ THE KNEES – OFTEN WOLVERINE IS REQUIRED TO ATTEMPT TO STEALTH HIS WAY THROUGH A DESIGNATED AREA. HE THEN CROUCHES DOWN, USING SUPER-POWERED KNEE JOINTS TO BEAR THE LOAD.



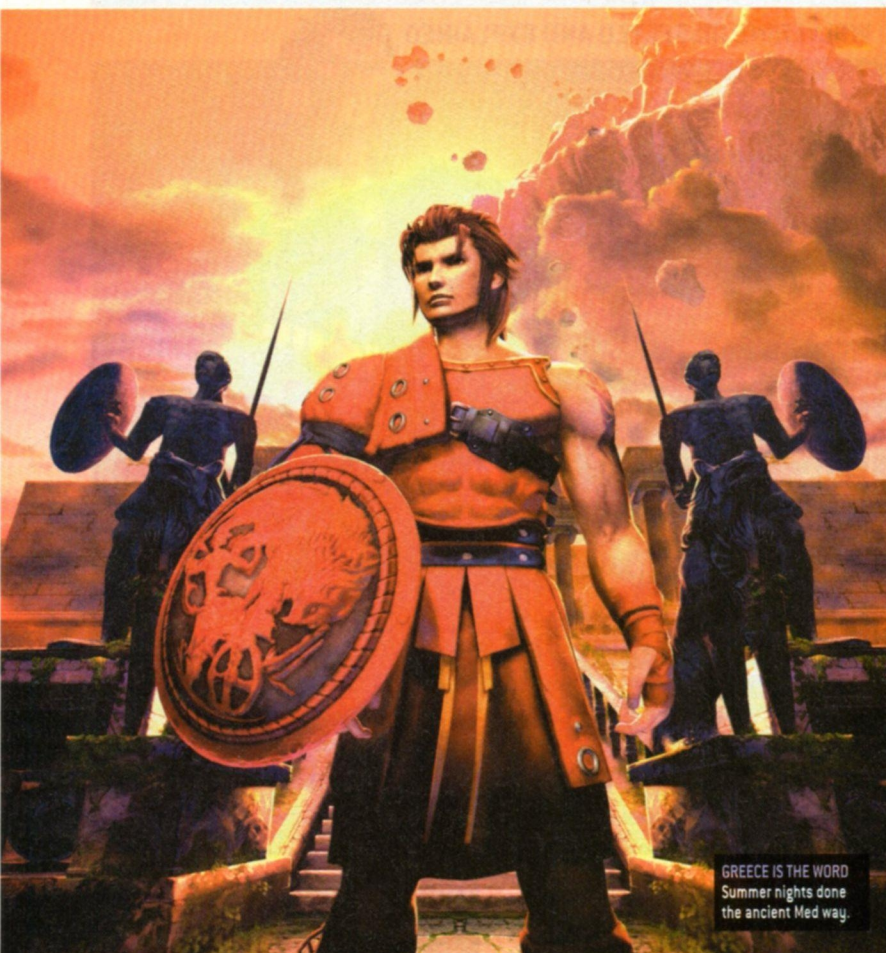
BRAWLING OUR EYES OUT If only there was more to the combat.

upholstered ideas and *Wolverine's Revenge* could've been vaguely enjoyable. But it isn't.

Just as it seems that Marvel's movies are bound by the laws of diminishing returns (*X-Men* was great, *Spider-Man* was good, *Daredevil* was OK) so their games now appear to be declining at a gradual rate. *The Hulk* is up next, and if that doesn't significantly up the stakes we're going to burn down our local comic shop. At the bottom of the notes made during our time with *Wolverine's Revenge* we wrote a single word. That word was 'guff'. We can truly say no more.

/ JON BROWN

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
• Wolverine looks the part	• We're bored of stealth play	
• Tonnes of game	• The levels are nondescript	
• A couple of decent sections	• The combat is repetitive	
• We quite like Wolverine	• It made us angry. And upset	
GRAPHICS	• The characters look OK, the backgrounds don't	7
SOUND	• A suitably grand soundtrack, OK effects	7
LIFESPAN	• Creaking, yellowing and tired	4
OVERALL SCORE		5
The only good thing about <i>X-Men 2</i> is the fact that it shares a name with a fairly sound action film. If you're looking to express your inner superhero, wait for Hulk.		



GREECE IS THE WORD
Summer nights done
the ancient Med way.



FEELING BLUE It's the
red eyes. They're a dead
giveaway he's evil.



GOT THE HORN Many
puzzles involve these
Unicorn statues.

RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE

THE LAST LEGENDARY ADVENTURE WE HAD WAS AFTER TEN SCHOONERS OF NEW.



TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
PUBLISHER	TAKE 2
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	TECMO

SOME PEOPLE SHOUT, SOME

people cry and some people write strongly worded letters to *The Daily Telegraph*, but when Rygar gets angry he likes to smash things. Like buildings for example. Ever wondered why the Acropolis in Athens looks so rosey? That's because Rygar's been there. The Coliseum in Rome? That's only still standing because a team of heavily armed Centurions stepped in and dragged Rygar out before he could raze the place to the ground.

Not that it's Rygar's fault you understand. After all, it's not every day the lord of hell opens up a portal in your own backyard and kidnaps your girlfriend is it? But that's exactly what

happened to this poor chap and what better way to get his revenge than an orgy of destruction through a beautiful Greco-Roman setting?

To help him in his stone and marble-worrying quest, Rygar is armed with the fabled Diskarmour – a half shield, half yo-yo, all spinning blade of death kind of thing – and it's on this weapon that most of the game's action is based. Think *Devil May Cry*'s pistols or *Onimusha*'s sword. In fact, in terms of gameplay think either of these games as there's a striking resemblance to both – not necessarily a bad thing by any means – with much of the action consisting of exploring, fighting monsters and solving cryptic puzzles in an attempt to progress through the game.

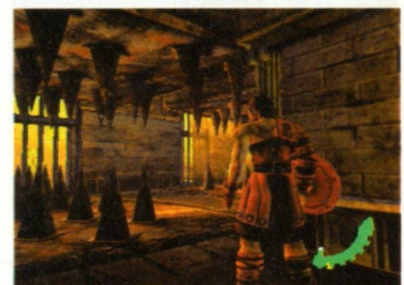
As Rygar progresses, he'll discover new Diskarmours – there are three in total – each of which has its own set of moves, combos and magical summon attacks. There's also the option to upgrade your Diskarmours by collecting power-ups left behind by defeated foes and damaged scenery, while beating particular enemies or puzzles rewards you with new and more powerful combos. And just to add another level of customisation, it's also possible to enhance your weapons with a series of magical stones hidden throughout the game, each of which bestows a particular power or advantage such as auto blocking, energy recovery or improved resistance to damage.



RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX As big as he looks, this is a tiny boss.

YOU SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND

Mainly though it's all about the fighting and in this respect the Diskarmour is a very versatile tool. Separate attacks can be performed with the square, triangle and circle buttons, but tapping two, three or even four buttons in succession causes Rygar to spin out some very impressive combination moves, ranging from quick, multi-hit strikes to more powerful attacks such as the Vortex move, a mini-tornado-producing attack that sucks up enemies and tosses them around for enormous damage.



SPIKEY SITUATION See those ceilings? They collapse on you.

**OOH I'LL GET BY
WITH A LITTLE HELP
FROM MY FIENDS!**

**USE YOUR DISKARMOUR TO
CALL UPON ANCIENT GREEK
MONSTERS AND BEASTIES.**



■ CERBERUS

Last seen playing Fluffy in the first *Harry Potter* movie, the three-headed Cerberus is the magical warrior attached to the Hades Diskarmour. With a bite that's much worse than his bark, Cerberus will happily pelt your foes with giant fireballs.



■ TALOS

Called forth from the Heaven Diskarmour, Talos is a giant bronze statue that was originally built to protect the Greek island of Crete. His special power is electricity, which he cheerfully jolts into any surrounding enemies causing trouble.



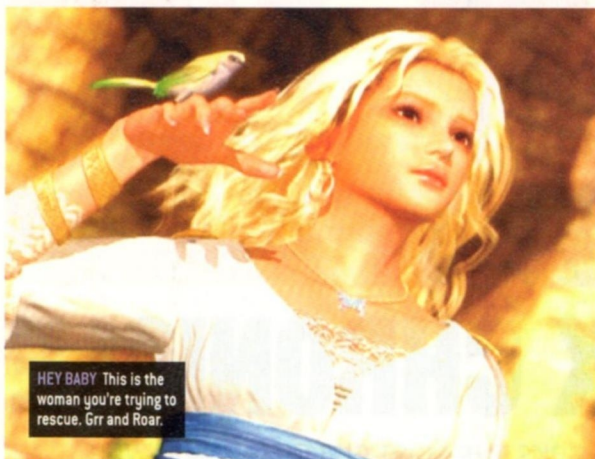
■ SIREN

Utilising the power of water, the ice maiden Siren can be summoned to unleash a cone of frost against the unsuspecting enemy. You'll need to grab the Sea Diskarmour to procure her services, but it's definitely worth the extra effort to have her allied.

Fighting aside, there are plenty of occasions when you'll need to use the Diskarmours to help solve puzzles instead of turning monster inside out. A handily placed Diskarmour can bring down the various magical barriers dotted around for example, while in a gracious nod to the most famous tomb plunderer himself – Mr Indiana Jones, in case you were wondering – it can also be used like a whip to climb up walls and swing across gaping holes in the landscape. Again, the further you progress, the more of



WHAT'S MY NAME?
What sort of name is
Rygar anyway?



HEY BABY This is the
woman you're trying to
rescue. Grr and Roar.

these Diskarmour skills you receive and one of Rygar's nicest touches is the way that several areas early in the game can only be reached once these skills become unlocked. That way you'll always have something new to explore, even if you do have to backtrack through the same area over and over again (and that's something you'll tend to do a lot of in *Rygar*).

MONSTER MONSTER

Like both *Devil May Cry* and *Animusha*, *Rygar* looks absolutely gorgeous. Throughout each of the seven diverse worlds you'll travel through, plus the elegant Grecian palace that links them all together, the attention to detail is excellent. Anybody who's toured some of the more attractive spots around the Mediterranean will immediately recognise the lush, green, rolling landscape or the huge, marble temples that make up the majority of the locations. It looks good enough to make you book a holiday.

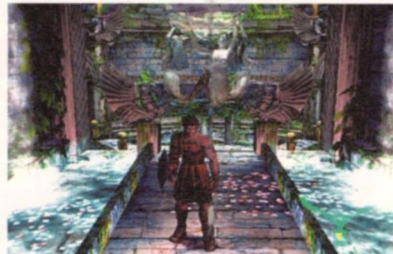
But while this means large, open areas to traverse, there is a downfall in that some cameras are placed high in the sky in an attempt to keep everything in view. Great for keeping track of where you're going perhaps, but some characters end up appearing small and indistinct, which is a pity as Rygar himself really moves and looks the part.

The monsters, on the other hand, are a mixed bag. The bosses are excellent – hulking great recreations of ancient Greek terrors such as the Titans and the Minotaur – but the incidental monsters that Rygar comes up against for the majority of the time are far less impressive. A generic collection of giant centipedes, gremlins and spiders, it's hardly a patch on *Animusha*'s demons or *Devil May Cry*'s animated puppets. Suffice to say, if it wasn't for the excellent

**/ THE
BOSSSES ARE
EXCELLENT –
HULKING
GREAT
RECREATIONS
SUCH AS
THE TITANS
AND THE
MINOTAUR /**



MONSTER MASH Monster guts regularly get spattered about.



WATERWORLD Looks pretty now? Wait 'til you see it moving.



LOOK OUT BELOW! See what we mean about high-up cameras?

selection of moves and combos on offer, the combat might not have been quite the fun element it so obviously is.

Fans of combat-heavy action adventures (and again, we'll reiterate *Devil May Cry* and *Animusha* as the benchmark titles in this category) will find plenty to enjoy in *Rygar*. It looks pretty, the Greco-Roman setting is novel and it features a really superb soundtrack. Then there's the combat, which is fun, and the puzzles aren't too taxing on the grey matter either, blending together to form the perfect mix of elements for this type of game. OK, so it's not that long (seven to ten hours on your first time play), but there are loads of secrets to discover that only appear on repeated plays, and whenever you complete a game you can always start another one with all your powers and bonuses still intact. So it's admittedly not a groundbreaking title, but it's a solid and entertaining experience nonetheless and one we'd heartily recommend.

/ MARK ROBINS

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- It's a great looker	- Generic monsters	
- Cool and novel weapons	- It's a bit brief	
- Superb soundtrack	- Suspect camera angles	
- Impressive boss fights	- Lots of backtracking	
GRAPHICS	- Generally excellent, stunning environments	8
SOUND	- Music that makes love to your ears	9
LIFESPAN	- Short, but offers plenty of replayability	7
OVERALL SCORE		8
The PS2 is really starting to excel in the combat-intense action adventure category and <i>Rygar</i> is no exception. Looks and sounds terrific and is great fun to play.		



DARK CHRONICLE



WE'LL ADMIT IT LOOKS THE MOST CHILDISH GAME EVER TO RECEIVE A PSW 9 OUT OF 10, BUT IT'S WORTH IT. HONESTLY!

TYPE	ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	JULY
PUBLISHER	SONY
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	LEVEL 5
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Big colourful worlds!	
/ Ah, my kids will love this!	
/ Wait, it's actually ace!	

IS THIS OR IS THIS NOT THE MOST

juvenile looking game ever to sweep across the pages of this here fine magazine? Honestly, it looks like a five-year-old's had a tantrum fit with his Crayola activity chest. And what's all this about happy elves and scary clowns? Do we really look like Big Ted and Jemima?

Of course not (we don't look like Big Ted, do we?), but it's important to get the fact out the way now that, at times, *Dark Chronicle* absolutely reeks of 'kid's game'. Colourful cartoon graphics, ever so smiley, non-threatening monsters and inane banter between groups of argumentative dwarves aren't going to go down well around here and at first glance *Dark Chronicle* appears to be nothing more than generic, kiddified adventuring plop. Endure the genteel setting though – and we're not kidding when we say that it becomes almost stomach churningly twee at

points – and *Dark Chronicle* blossoms, rather surprisingly, into an absolutely superb role-playing adventure.

ONCE UPON A TIME

Despite the 'pink elephants and lemonade' trappings, *Dark Chronicle*'s storyline has more in common with sci-fi films such as *The Terminator* than the Disney movies it so excellently emulates. It all revolves around the evil Dark Lord Griffon (oh yes it does...) who, having decided that the world just isn't quite dark enough for his liking, decides to head 1,000 years back into the past to wreak full-scale havoc, thereby conveniently destroying the future.

Understandably concerned over this unsavoury turn of events – and quite honestly, who wouldn't be? – Griffon is chased into the past by the young swordswoman Monica where, with the assistance of her friend Max (who also happens to be the hero of the game), she sets about hunting down Griffon and his minions while simultaneously trying to rebuild the towns shattered by Griffon's transgressions.

There's more to it than that – Max's hunt for his missing mother principally – but we're heading dangerously back into *Play School* territory, so we'll stop all this talk of story for now and instead shift our focus towards the enormity of the task facing the cuter-than-cute couple of Max and Monica.

To begin with, there are the dungeons that need to be negotiated, and by 'dungeons' we mean huge, randomly generated forests, caves and sewer systems, full of vicious monsters and bulging treasure chests. It's here that the bulk of the game's action resides and *Dark Chronicle*'s simple and effective combat system makes



NO BODY TO FIGHT WITH A skeleton soldier, aww, how cute!



PURPLE PAIN This is about as grizzly as *Dark Chronicle* gets.



DAFT CHRONI-KILL It's no *Soul Calibur 2*, but the combat's fun.

trawling through the assorted beasts a real pleasure. Similar to the system seen in titles such as *Kingdom Hearts*, only far more streamlined and smoothly animated, Max and Monica swing, block and flip around the screen like east European gymnasts on angel dust and it's handy that they do as the wandering monsters they come across can be pretty troublesome, a clear sign that *Dark Chronicle* isn't quite the overly-kiddie offering it appears to be on the outset.

As you progress through the various environments, Max and Monica happen upon geostones, magical items that contain plans for the shattered towns and cities. It's these that are put to use in the secondary aspect of the game as Max and Monica take the raw materials collected from the dungeons and use them to build barns, houses and other sundry structures. It's all about placing them down in an appealing layout, but don't worry if all that sounds a bit too much like a town planning simulation. Like the combat and dungeon exploration elements of the game that work so well, it's all presented in a simple and entertaining manner.



MAX THE IRON Your assistants are beautifully imaginative.





CAN I FIGHT SOME MORE? Max looks like a fantasy Oliver Twist.

And that, in a nutshell, is pretty much all there is to it. Enter dungeon, kill monsters, get geostones, and recreate cities. But *Dark Chronicle* is much more than that. It's an onion of a game if you like, with every layer of substance peeled off revealing a hundred new layers of subtlety and depth just beneath, and it's only when you finally discover this for yourself that things really start to get interesting

AND THEY ALL LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Designing your towns isn't just about plonking down a few buildings wherever you choose—it's about how you customise them as well. What colour you paint them, who you get to move into them and where you place them in relation to each other. And the more set conditions you meet by doing this—rebuilding a thriving bakery for example—the more you'll affect the future, hence Max and Monica's helpful ability to hop back and forth through time to check out the changes for themselves.

There's also a huge amount to explore when it comes to developing Max and Monica themselves. Their weapons, for example, can be upgraded in thousands of different ways, with progressively more powerful forms regularly appearing over time.

Another nice feature is Max's camera that can be used to snap hundreds of different items. Each photograph then forms an idea and by



/ DARK CHRONICLE ISN'T QUITE THE OVERLY-KIDDIE OFFERING IT APPEARS TO BE ON THE OUTSET /



MAX'S WELL NICE HOUSE It's a Japanese cartoon wonderland.

combining these concepts with others, Max has the ability to invent even more weapons and items. Or how about the dozens of townspeople that can be conscripted into your party, with each one providing a different form of secondary support? All that and we haven't even mentioned the customisable features of Max's robotic armour or Monica's ability to transform herself into monsters yet!

What we're trying to say is that every minute's play—and there's plenty of minutes to get through considering the gargantuan quest on offer—opens up something new to try or explore, almost to the point where it's easy to lose track of everything that's going on, and it's this constant source of entertainment that makes *Dark Chronicle* such an astounding and excellent game. Be warned though ye of mature tastes—the saccharin sweetness of it all could prove too much for that sophisticated palette of yours.

/ MARK ROBINS

VERDICT

PSW

UPPERS

- Fantastic cartoon graphics
- Slick, action combat system
- Lots and lots and lots to do
- Will keep ten-year-olds happy

DOWNERS

- Way too 'Disney' for some
- Repetitive music
- Lacks focus in places
- Too big for the casual gamer?

GRAPHICS - Gorgeous, well-animated cartoon heaven

9

SOUND - The airy-fairy tunes repeat themselves

7

LIFESPAN - Absolutely buckets of depth to explore

10

OVERALL SCORE

Although aimed at the younger player, *Dark Chronicle* is a challenging game that becomes utterly compelling once you're used to the pre-pubescent stylings.

9

CAN WE FIX IT?



BOB THE BUILDER SHOWS US HOW TO REBUILD A CARTOON WONDERLAND.



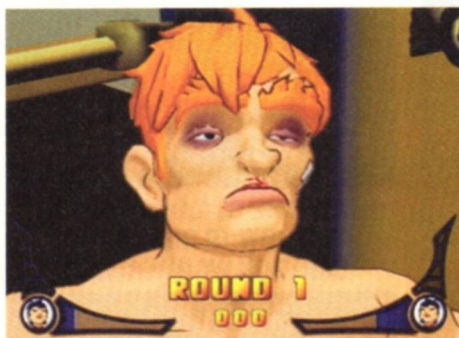
HEY THERE EVERYBODY! MY CHUMS MAX and Monica are sad because some nasty old man has turned their world into a wasteland. That's terrible! But guess what? Fixing things is what I do best and I'm going to show you how you can fix things too! First off, you'll need to choose what you want to build (you'll learn how to build new things as you progress), and then you'll have to choose where you want to build it.



NEXT, YOU'LL WANT TO MAKE IT NICE AND pretty by adding on chimneys and lamps and stuff. I've painted the roof purple and put a tree down next to it! Oh... who am I kidding? Bob the bloody Builder, I ask you. I'm not really like this you know. Since when have you known builders to be happy and cheery all the time? You should see the way my mates laugh at me down the pub. I feel a right proper plum sometimes.



ANYWAY, ONCE YOU'VE PUT YOUR BUILDINGS down you can wander round them to your heart's content. You can even look around inside them if you like, or move somebody into them. Mind you, they're a fussy lot so they'll probably start asking you to build them extras like carts and ponds and stuff. And do I ever get a word of thanks? Not bloody likely. Still, I'm off to see Wendy now. Something about her pipes need seeing to...



PURPLE & CUT Mickey McFist on the wrong end of yet another mauling.



BLOW HARD There's no stamina bar here, so feel free to jab away.



CATCHY HOOK When powered-up, your blows are twice as dangerous.



BLACK & BRUISED

A CEL-SHADED BOXING GAME THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN RUBBISH BUT ISN'T.

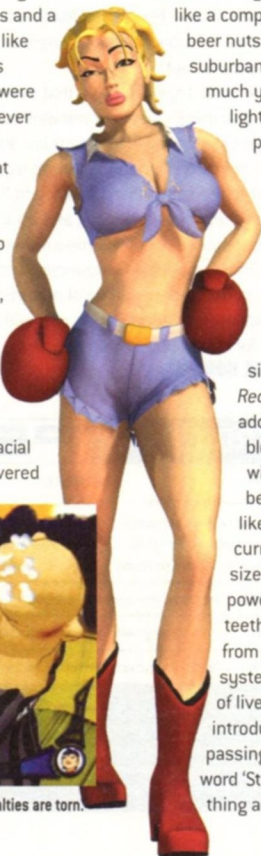
TYPE	FIGHTING
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	JULY 17
PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	DIGITAL FICTION
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Mickey McFist goes nuts / Swelling and bleeding / Bonkers knockout blows	

LIKE READY 2 RUMBLE 2, *Black & Bruised* requires nothing more than calloused fingertips and a sturdy joypad. Because like *Ready 2 Rumble 2*, *Black & Bruised* is brainless beyond belief. In fact, if we were forced to line up all the games we've ever played in order of intelligence, Digital Fiction's fighter would be right down at the 'go fish' end, two places below *Cuddle the Dead Badger*. It is, as the saying so nearly goes, as thick as two short morons.

That doesn't stop it from being fun, in a breaking stuff kind of way. The characters are cartoonish and well drawn (from the opera singer to the Oi-ish brawler), the scraps are fast and suitably brutish and – most importantly of all – the extremes of facial damage promised in the title are delivered



RACK IN THE FACE Cel-shaded breasts – our loyalties are torn.



in fine style. Each of the combatants has a decent enough range of combos, but, much like a complimentary bowl of urine-flecked beer nuts stationed on the bar of a rowdy suburban pub, it's entirely up to you how much you take in. Help yourself to a lightly-salted stream of hard-hitting punches by all means, just don't feel that you have to. Often you're best off just forgetting any pretence at boxing technique; howling at the moon and freaking out with the X button. It's equally as likely to result in a victory.

Black & Bruised bolts just a single innovation onto the basic *Ready 2 Rumble* engine: the addition of power-ups. Every clean blow you land sees you awarded with a single star. Reach ten stars before your opponent does likewise and you'll grab the item currently on display, be it an over-sized S offering you a single, high-powered punch or a set of vampire teeth that entitle you to steal health from your opponent. It's a neat system, one that does a decent job of livening up the fights while subtly introducing the merest hint of a passing nod in the direction of the word 'Strategy'. In short, it's the best thing about *Black & Bruised*.

As always with arcade-style fighting games, the only way you're going to get anything like the most out of *Black & Bruised* is if you can find a mate willing to act as your sparring partner. The PS2 makes a decent fist of offering you a challenge, but the simple play means you'll be bored within hours. The two-player mode, on the other hand, is solid enough to last you days.

Please don't mistake any of this as a recommendation to buy *Black & Bruised*. The score below is more a reflection of the fact that we enjoyed beating the crap out of an overweight opera singer than anything to do with its merits as a PS2 game. Not a great game then, barely even a good one, but at times it made us chuckle, and that's got to count for something.

/JON BROWN

VERDICT	PSW
UPPERS - Fast and brainless - Power-up system works well - Characters are nice - Good on two-player	DOWNERS - We can't condone cel-shading - Gets boring fairly quickly - Worse than <i>Ready 2 Rumble 2</i> - We can't condone cel-shading
GRAPHICS - We really can't condone cel-shading	7
SOUND - Tiresome banter between the fighters	6
LIFESPAN - So shallow we can only advise a rental	5

OVERALL SCORE
There might be something here for you, but only if you loved *Ready 2 Rumble 2* and you're a fan of games coloured from a extremely limited palette.

6



OUT OF CONTROL The handling can be distinctly twitchy.



BEACH BUGGY Control the car over different surfaces.

SMASH CARS

REMEMBER WHEN YOU USED TO SET UP WOODEN RAMPS IN YOUR BACK GARDEN FOR YOUR REMOTE CONTROL CAR? WELL, IT'S NOT AS GOOD AS THAT.

TYPE	RACING
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	JUNE
PUBLISHER	METRO 3D
PRICE	\$89.95
DEVELOPER	CREAT STUDIO
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Radio controlled mayhem	
/ Flippabulous tricks	
/ Major wheel spins	

LET'S FACE IT, AS TOYS GO,

remote control cars are pretty cool. They are the ultimate in gadgetry chic. Take the remote control Audi

TT that arrived in our office the other day for example. One gentle whirl from it's double A battery powered engine and it was up with the 'chair leg' obstacle course before you could say "childish games journalists get caught acting like ten-year-old boys at Christmas again".

But try to transfer that sense of fun onto a console, however, and things quickly start to lose their excitement. It just doesn't translate. After all, where's the enjoyment in slamming your car headlong into a skirting board if you're not going to be able to pick up all the pieces of broken plastic afterwards?

Perhaps the main problem with *Smash Cars* is that in its desperation to really try to capture the essence of driving remote control cars, it's somehow managed to recreate all the problems

of the toys as well: twitchy controls for example, as anybody who's played with a powerful RC car will know only too well. There's no gradual acceleration or gentle turning curves to master here; it's a straight forward case of start/stop and left/right. Then there's that annoying habit where cars get stuck for ages on the tiniest bits of scenery – a table leg for instance, or rough patch of carpet. Not such a problem in real life, when you can simply pick your car up and set it on its way again, but not so appealing when it happens in a game.

Patience is, however, a virtue, and exhibit some of it in your quest to master the jittery handling and you'll find a game that really tries it's best to be entertaining. Although not quite the 'Micro Machines with petrol engines' we were hoping for, it's bright and colourful at least with a nice looking variety of cars and courses. But again, *Smash Cars* tries to impress us just a bit too hard and ends up with overly long courses and massively confusing track layouts. Finding all the novelties on each track is one thing – the rifle-firing guards on the military base, or the mad bull on the Western ranch track for example – but not at the expense of getting lost round every bend please.

One aspect that does work well though is the stunt mode, and it's here that *Smash Cars* comes into its barrel-rolling own. Apply a liberal dollop of engine boost (all remote control cars should have one of these), approach a ramp at full speed and you're launched into aerial ballet of toy car spinning madness. There's even the obligatory sloooooow-moooo (say it really, really slowly for extra effect) look, just so your stylish stunts come complete with that extra sheen of coolness. At least that's one feature you wouldn't get in real life. Of course, you'll soon get bored of this aspect alone, but still, it's something to show off to your mates.

Is it enough to warrant a purchase of the game though? Sadly not, unless you happen to be made of money or you've had a go of every other car game which is on the market. It's not that *Smash Cars* is that bad a game, it's just that for 90 bucks you could probably go out and buy your own remote control car and have a lot more fun with it.

/ MARK ROBINS



SMASH HIT? It's got all of the disadvantages but few of the perks of genuine RC racing.



REMOTE LOCATIONS The off-road worlds provide no-rules racing.

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Great stunt mode	- Twitchy handling	
- Colourful graphics	- Sticky scenery	
- Novel course design	- Confusing track layout	
- Reminds us of childhood	- Real RC cars more fun	
GRAPHICS	- Colourful and attractive	7
SOUND	- Awful trance/dance soundtrack	5
LIFESPAN	- Needs some patience: we don't have any	5
OVERALL SCORE		
It must have seemed like a good idea to make a game based around remote control cars, but the end result is very unfulfilling. Eye catching, but lacks the thrill of the real thing.		
5		



STEEL, NOT SUNSHINE
Metal fans will be happy.
There's plenty of it here.



DOUBLE SIDED STICKY TAPE
We built this from a sieve,
an iron and yogurt cups.



CORE BLIMEY That's a detailed
droid, if ever we saw one.



AVOID!! Like missiles? Like robots, yeah? Go away.



LIKE ALIENS, BUT METAL Locations reminiscent of the films.

ARMORED CORE 3

"I WOULD HAVE USED MY M-35 SUPERMISSILES AND HYPERBOMBS, BUT THEY COST TOO MUCH." AH, THE UNMISTAKABLY OILY SMELL OF THE MECH SIM.

TYPE	MECH FIGHTING
PLAYERS	1-2
OUT	NOW
PUBLISHER	METRO3D
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	FROM SOFTWARE
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Mechs shooting bots! / Bots shooting mechs! / And some droids	

WE CAN PICTURE IT NOW. "Ah, yes," says the man on *Antiques Roadshow*. "It's an *Armored Core 3* robot. Good condition, full of upgrades..." He chuckles at the little old lady who's brought it in. "We don't see many these days. How quaint." *Armored Core 3*, you see, is a bit of an anachronism. It's an action game starring what you might call 'traditional' robots. Compared with say, the automated angels of *Zone of the Enders*, they're little more than tanks on legs. We might think they look futuristic, but any Japanese toddler could tell you that in the world of 'mechs' (one of Japan's many oddball crazes), they're on a par with steam trains, hand-cranked cars and penny-farthings.

They're the stars of a game that's appropriately retro. A city called Layered is in the hands of the mysterious Controller, an autocratic leader who lets the giant Corporations squabble

for power beneath him. You can choose to accept different contracts from different factions, advancing the plot and increasing your loyalty to the mega-businesses. When a freedom-fighting organisation pops up, you can choose to join them as well. It's all up to you, with the money you make being spent on upgrades for your mechs. We're boring ourselves here.

The actual fighting isn't too shabby. It revolves around targeting enemies using the large on-screen box then hammering in auto-targeting missiles. It's a nice balance between overly fiddly aiming and mindless button-bashing. The only real problem is that it's unwieldy to tackle enemies above or below you, which can be a pain. To avoid enemy fire, you rocket around on limited boosters that take time to recharge. The idea seems to be to recreate what it would be like to pilot a real giant robot. Erm, good.

As before, you can customise every aspect of your mech, from the paint scheme to the power source – as long as you have the money. We mean everything. The list of spare parts seems almost endless, with every single one modelled in meticulous detail. There's more information on a new radiator here than there is on a main character in most adventure games. If you enjoy hand-painting tiny tanks or making up stories about the plastic people who live in your massive model railways, you'll love it. Yes, both of you.

If you want to risk the extra expense, many missions allow you to employ consorts. These are sidekick 'bots for hire that fight alongside

you. It's rarely essential to begin with, but it raises a nice dilemma: do you go it alone and hoard all the cash for yourself, or do you make it easier and split the winnings? Every time you use your weapons or damage yourself, you'll have to get back up to scratch. Play badly, and you'll end up in debt.

If that doesn't float your battleship, there's always the linked or split-screen fights for two players. In short, everything you'd expect, and nothing surprising. This will confirm what everyone thinks of mech-heads, but they won't care – this is a specialist product, like grouting or fetish mags. *Armored Core 3* is detailed, exacting... and almost entirely irrelevant these days.

/JOFF BROWN



BOSH 'N' MECHS Violence has never been so little fun.

VERDICT	PSW
UPPERS - Ultra-detailed mechs - Complex fighting system - In-depth missions - Looks quite nice	DOWNERS - For enthusiasts only - Zzzzzzz... ...Sorry, we dozed off - What were you asking?
GRAPHICS - Smooth, but with fairly empty-looking levels	6
SOUND - The endless clanking of big metal bots	5
LIFESPAN - If you're into it, mech-tweaking will last days	7
OVERALL SCORE <i>Armored Core 3</i> is set in an absorbing little universe, but it's really mechanistic and bleak. Mech fighting is actually great fun, although essentially limited.	6



BLOOD RAYNE

AND YOU THOUGHT THE VIOLENCE IN BLADE 2 WAS NASTY...

TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
PLAYERS	1
OUT	NOW
PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
PRICE	\$99.95
DEVELOPER	TERMINAL REALITY
SEE IT ON DVD	
/ Vampires!	
/ Blood!	
/ Vampires spurting blood!	

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, LET'S

give it up for the humble old vampire. From modest beginnings as a vitamin D-dodging old geezer in a cape, he's gone from bodice-ripping baddie to ultra-cool hero of the lost, and you know what? We're absolutely sick of him. Forget *Blade*, forget *Angel* – forget, even, the ludicrous inclusion of techno-savvy neck-rippers in the latest *Matrix* movie – because when it comes to vampires, there's nothing we haven't seen before.

Don't get us wrong, we still like the idea of vampires, and goth chic will never go out of fashion, but it soon becomes clear the moment you start plodding your way through *Blood Rayne* – the latest vampire-heavy effort to hit PS2 – that everything in it is second-hand. A half-vampire heroine torn between good and evil; draining blood from enemies to maintain your energy; the usual selection of mad occultists and demons from hell... Isn't this just about every modern day vampire flick staple ever?

To be fair, *Blood Rayne* does slightly alter the setting by swapping the modern day backdrops of *Blade* and *Angel* for World War 2, but the inclusion of dark magic-obsessed Nazis only further reminds you that both *Indiana Jones* and the forthcoming *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* have done this angle to death already.

But originality was clearly never meant to be high on *Blood Rayne's* list of priorities. That particular honour is saved for the violence and the vast majority of *Blood Rayne's* playing time is spent demonstrating just how messy being a vampire really is. Whether it's 'letting rip' (literally) with Rayne's twin blades or pumping the bad guys with bullets, chances are you're never far from the slaughter. Evisceration is the keyword here and *Blood Rayne* is jam-packed with the wet, meaty chunks to prove it.

True to form, Rayne sports many of the talents you'd expect from a game of this variety, not least of all being the obligatory speed-slowing 'bullet-time' effect, but at least it all works well, and bar the occasionally jumpy camera there's definitely a modicum of fun to be had decapitating moustache-sporting Nazis. And the more you fight, the more angry you get, resulting in a spectacular orgy of violence as Rayne unleashes her bloodlust in a manner that brings new meaning to the term 'red mist'.

Beyond the excellent voice acting and the truly humungous levels though, *Blood Rayne* suffers because it's just not that good. Not good enough, at least, to make us sit up and take notice. For one it starts too slowly, with a frustratingly dull trawl through a bleak North American swamp, and it's not until at least a

quarter of way in that things get interesting with a sortie to a Nazi base. The graphics are pretty crappy too and for such a deadly powerful half-she-vampire type thing, why is it that Rayne looks so pathetically weedy?

So there you have it: mostly average and predictable, but at least it's got the odd cool moment to keep the vampire massive happy in places. Certainly not worth a wooden stake through the heart then, but a nasty rub of garlic between the cheeks really wouldn't go amiss.

/ MARK ROBINS

VERDICT		PSW
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Sheer, gory exuberance	- Clichéd and unoriginal	
- Huge levels	- Disappointing graphics	
- Decent voice acting	- Takes ages to get going	
- You get to beat up Germans	- Camera issues. Predictably.	
GRAPHICS	- Weedy characters and dull backdrops	5
SOUND	- Not much, but what's there is good	7
LIFESPAN	- Worth replaying to enjoy the gore	6
OVERALL SCORE		5
Very uninspiring to begin with, but develops into a more entertaining slice and dice 'em up as it progresses. Goths will enjoy it, more normal folks might enjoy renting it.		

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SOLUTIONS

IF SPLINTER CELL HASN'T ALREADY MADE YOU SNEAKY ENOUGH, THESE CHEATS SHOULD DO THE TRICK.

CLIMATE CHANGE

IT APPEARS THAT STEALTH IS THE new black in the world of gaming. Instead of brashly storming in like a fatigues-wearing bull in a china shop, players apparently want to sneak into the danger zones now, remaining as silent as Man Utd fans when their team goes a goal down—just before the final whistle. Why is this? Well, we could claim it's a reflection of the nervous political climate we live in, where tracking down fugitives is no longer merely a case of sending the boys in. Alternatively, it could be that games developers are ultimately all lazy sods, and as soon as one comes up with a good idea, the rest blatantly follow like it's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. So, what's it to be? Acute political metaphor or a dearth of new ideas? You what? How dare you call us cynical!

MARK ROBINS / STAFF WRITER

MORTAL KOMBAT

85

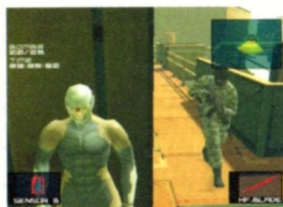
■ Are you finding yourself just a little too mortal?



MGS2: SUBSTANCE

84

■ Prefer to be rock solid rather than snake solid?



GUILTY GEAR X2

85

■ Unlock extra playable characters the easy way!



I AM SAM Tough, uncompromising and, most of all, silent.

SPLINTER CELL

SURVIVING THE CLANDESTINE WORLD OF SAM FISHER TAKES EVERY TRICK IN THE COVERT OPERATOR'S BOOK. LUCKILY FOR YOU, WE'VE SURVIVED EVERYTHING SPLINTER CELL COULD THROW AT IT. IT'S ALL IN THE WRISTS...

GENERAL HINTS AND TIPS

- The beauty of *Splinter Cell* is that virtually all tasks and assignments can be completed in any way you see fit. This walkthrough represents the choices we made to complete the game, but feel free to experiment with different cover or not so covert strategies.
- Remember to always check bodies for such items and always check the data that will usually provide handy information to make mission easier.
- We know it can be a pain, but don't risk sounding the alarm by carelessly leaving bodies out in the open, or worse, somewhere in a well-lit area. Place them in a dark spot.
- Always use the optic cable to see what's on the other side of the door.

MISSION 1: T'BLISI OLD TOWN, T'BLISI, GEORGIA

■ OCTOBER 16, 2004, 20:01 HOURS

Your number one priority is to locate agents Blaustein and Madison, but first you need to rendezvous with local NSA informant Thomas Gorgenidze to glean important info on the Blaustein's area of operation. After being contacted by Lambert, walk up the steps on the right, and then use the ladder—achieved by jumping onto it.

When on the roof, open the trapdoor and drop down into the hole. Crouch and walk past the plants and light filtering through from the right into a bricked off area. Walk over to the left hand corner and climb up the pipe onto the roof. Use the

zipline to reach the burning building on the other side of the street. Exit through the only door; turn left and go through the door on the left. Exit through the door at the other end of the room. Go left to the end of the corridor and head down the stairs. Jump up and hand-over-hand to the other side of the blazing gap. After the next message, go left and then right through the next doorway into another fire-filled room.

Exit through the door on the left and then go left to the stairs. Enter the door on the left. Gorgenidze is lying straight ahead and to the left of the table in front



HANG TIME Use the legendary split jump on the guard.



CRISPY Get the info from the agent before he croaks.

of you, next to a pile of rubble. Talk to him for some vital information.

■ OCTOBER 16, 2004, 20:28 HOURS

The next task is to find the black box hidden in Blaustein's apartment. Exit west out of the room to a corridor with a broken water pipe. Go up to the doorway, crouch down and shoot out the skylight to allow the smoke to escape. Exit through the door to the east and save your game when prompted. You need to look for a fake bookshelf in a wall panel in order to find the black box. Walk to the end of the balcony; turn left and go right to the end. There you'll see a gap in the fence and a pipe running next to the wall. Jump up and hand-over-hand to the other side, not forgetting to lift your legs up (press **○**) to reach the other side.

After the radio conversation featuring a guard, sneak around to where he is and, from the bushes pop him in the head with a bullet. Another guard will come out through the doors, so quickly dispatch him too. Open the door to Blaustein's apartment and access the computer to retrieve a data stick. Next, make your way through the curtains to the rear of the house. Pick up the medikit from the rubble on the floor, and then go up to the painting on the wall and slide it open to reveal another computer. The data stick contains the door code [091772] necessary to open the back door leading to the apartment. The next task is to find Gurgenzidze's dead drop, so punch in the code to open the door and exit onto another balcony. Use the zipline to the left, which takes you to the other side of the roof. Walk to the end of the room and go into the small area with a lift shaft. Jump forward and grab the wire and descend to the roof of the elevator. Interact with the trapdoor and drop inside. Save when prompted.

■ OCTOBER 16, 2004, 21:02 HOURS

After the incoming message, use your lock pick to exit through the doorway up the stairs. To use the lock picks effectively, slowly rotate the left analogue stick around the outer edge of its range until you see and hear the first pin begin to move. As soon as this occurs, don't move anything, as the pin should lift automatically. Keep repeating this



process over and over again until all of the pins have been lifted.

Once outside, shoot the light bulb above the doorway, and stealthily creep towards the end of the balcony. Pick up the bottle and throw it down the stairs to attract one of the two guards below. As he approaches the smashed bottle, take him out with a shot to the head. This will attract the other guard, so run back to the doorway shrouded in darkness and crouch down. Don't worry he won't be able to see you, so plug him and head back down the stairs.

Walk past the drunk they were hassling and head up the path and stairs into a courtyard with a fountain in the middle. Walk past the fountain and head for the right hand corner where the red light is and go through the tunnel. Use the computer to open the gates outside and pick up the 5.72 ammo, and two medikits before returning outside to the courtyard. Be careful – there's a policeman patrolling outside now, so either take him out or sneak past him through the gates. Sneak up on the civilian in the next area and knock him out. Don't shoot him or Lambert will get pissed off and quite possibly terminate your mission. Pick him up and hide him somewhere dark to avoid alerting the police.

Continue on up the alleyway and pick up the bottle from in between the two

bins on the right and throw it against the wall. When a policeman arrives to investigate, sneak up and knock him out or shoot him. Take the satchel to retrieve another data stick. Follow the path around until you see another policeman and deal with him as you see fit. About three or four alleyways further along you come to a closed area with a white container at the end. Climb up onto it and wall climb up and onto the top of the wall above. Hop off the wall over the other side and save when prompted.

■ OCTOBER 16, 2004, 21:29 HOURS

Head down the stairs and use the optic cable under the door to see a police guard. Open the door, crouch down and wait for him to walk away from you. Now begin to follow him stealthily until he disappears into the room. Now quickly shoot out one of the lights and perform the split jump on a dark area of wall between one of the cells. When he walk back underneath you, time your jump to land on him and you'll knock him out instantly.

Check out the contents of the room the guard was in and use the computer to get another data stick. There's another guard patrolling the other corridor so when he's left his room and about halfway down the corridor, run over and let him see you. Now quickly dash back and perform the split jump again in the same place you did before and drop on him too. Now head for the lab where the second guard was patrolling, making sure you duck down so the technician inside can't see you through the glass. Sneak up to him and interrogate him before knocking him out. Use the computer in the lab, before heading into the morgue through the green door in the corner. Quickly shoot the camera and grab the medikit attached to one of the trolleys containing a corpse. Check the other corpse to trigger a message from Lambert.

Exit the morgue and lab, and then head through the previously locked door in the corridor to the left. Save the game. Go up the stairs, open the door and wait until the triggered cut-scene finishes. Cling to the right hand wall and make your way around the outer edge of the room, past the man sat down, until you come out into a corridor behind the glass. Walk to the end

of the corridor and creep up the stairs. Turn left and then sneak up to the nearest guard, drag him away from his desk to the stairs and knock him out. Repeat for the second guard. Return to the desk area and take the second door on the right. Slowly creep through the curtains at the end and knock out the guard. Access the computer and after the message, go back down the stairs into the room where the man is sat on the chair. Simply exit through the main doors there to finish the level.

MISSION 2: GEORGIAN DEFENCE MINISTRY, T'BLISI, GEORGIA

■ OCTOBER 16, 2004, 23:01 HOURS

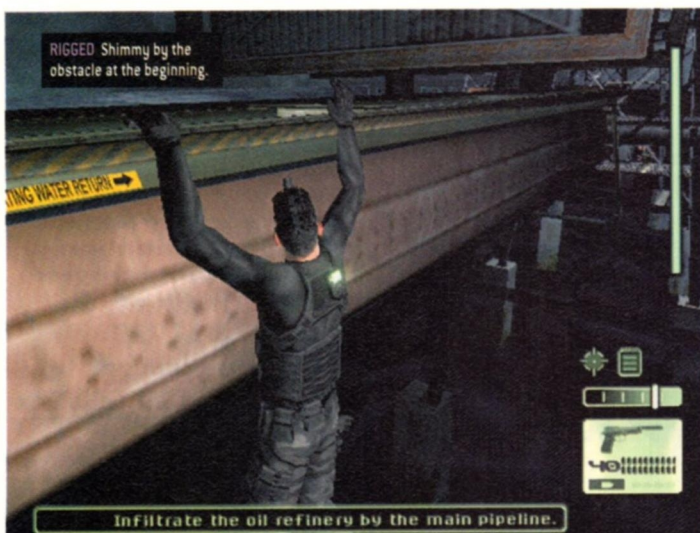
Walk up to the steel post and interact with it to rappel down the side of the wall. Hop in through the open window with the flapping blinds about halfway down (press **△**). There's a guard in the room so stay where you are until he's chosen a book and returned to his desk. When he's sat back down with his back to you, cling to the edge of the bookshelf, sneak up to him and grab him. As he's on his own, drag him to the passageway between the two bookshelves and knock him out. Shoot the camera located above the doorway and use the computer in the room to retrieve a data stick, which contains useful info on how to disable the power grid.

Exit through the door and use the camera optic under the door. When the guard begins to walk away from you, open the door and creep up to the darkened pillar on the right wall. Let him come back your way and when he passes you, sneak over to the guard standing idle and knock him out. Before you're seen, quickly dash to the dark area at the end of the room, crouch down and shoot the other alarmed guard in the head.

Go through the door to the right, head up the stairs into the area with the scaffolding and collect all of the goodies there (pistol ammo, disposable pick, medikit). Try to use your athleticism to get right to the top, before returning back down to the doorway. Instead of exiting, head right down the stairwell shooting out the light bulbs as you go along. This makes you less conspicuous when it comes to shooting out the two cameras as you descend.

At the bottom you reach a checkpoint, so open the door and quickly shoot the camera. Sneak along the left edge of the parking lot – picking up the bottle along the way – until you reach the car on the left. From here, shoot the camera, which is positioned roughly opposite to where you are and a bit to the right of the driver who's stood next to the other car. Now you should sneak up to where the driver was, and either use the bottle to distract him or follow him into the corner and interrogate him. Leave the parking lot through the door you entered and head for the door where the two guards were. Open the door and crouch down as a camera is directly above the doorframe. Cling to the left wall and shuffle along, and then turn and shoot it out. Use the





computer in the corner for another data stick, then exit through the hole in the roof and save.

■ OCTOBER 16, 2004, 23:41 HOURS

Quietly creep along the air duct and drop down into the freezer area of the kitchen. Walk up to the flapping divider and wait until the guard has gobbled into the Colonel's supper and departed. Sneak up to the chef and knock him cold before opening the door in front and repeating the same vicious action on the guard with his back to you outside.

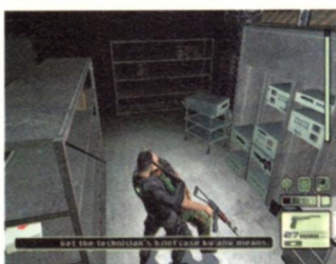
Descend the stairwell in the corridor outside and, following a conversation regarding the retinal scanner, sneak halfway down the right hand stairs. Wait for the guard to start walking away and walk to the bottom. You'll be spotted, but if you immediately hide under the stairs, the guard won't home in on you. When he walks by you, follow him into the corner and knock him out. The other guard can be shot, so hide them both in a dark area.

Activate the computer and hide to avoid being spotted by the approaching Colonel. When he sits down, sneak up and grab (not whack) him and drag him over to the retinal scanner. Checkpoint. Take out the camera and go through the double doors. Get into a dark area to avoid two patrolling guards and aim the laser mic at the ascending elevator. Take out the two guards by a stealthy blow to the head or using hot lead, check them for items, and then climb up the ornamental latticework to the right of the elevator before saving.

■ OCTOBER 17, 2004, 00:14 HOURS

Hide from the guards in the shadow and then dash into the elevator. Press up on the pad and you arrive at floor 7. Immediately take out the camera to the right even if it alerts the guard. Hide in the darkened area just beside the passageway he comes down. When he turns his back, plug him with a bullet. Now duck down in the dark and expertly take down his two gun-wielding associates. Pretty tough this, but at least they're out of the way.

Before carrying on to the end where the corpses are laid, you may want to unlock the door next to the elevator for a data stick. From where the corpses are



SNEAKY Grab the guard destroying the equipment.

laid, shoot out another camera at the far end of the next corridor. Check the computer in the room to the right, and then continue down the corridor to use the ladders up to the roof in a room containing a medikit and some pistol ammo. Locate the black steel pin and rappel down into Nicholas's office. As soon as you break through the glass, knock out the guard, shoot out the lights and access the terminal. Get the frag grenade from his satchel and crouch in the dark. Shoot or knock out the guard who rushes the office.

Access the terminal again and exit the room. Checkpoint. Go left and use the door to the left with the red light above it. Descend the stairs and get the medikit at the bottom. Open the door crouch down and take out the guard with a single shot, and then quickly rush down into the shadows to tackle the guard who comes out shooting from behind you. Leap forward through the flapping curtain where the first guard you killed is lying and slid down the pipe to the bottom, and rendezvous with your man at the end of the car park.

MISSION 3: GFO OIL RIG, GEORGIAN WATERS, CASPIAN SEA

■ OCTOBER 27, 2004, 09:38 HOURS

Climb up the ladder and travel along the pipe until you're blocked. Jump up and hand-over-hand along the wire, raising your legs where necessary. Drop off and slowly walk to the edge of the gangway and drop, only to grab a hold of the edge with your hands. Shimmy along past the grey container. Pull yourself up again and walk forward. Checkpoint.



ZIP-O-LIGHTER Slide down and enjoy the fireworks.

Walk onto the small square platform to your right, and then jump up to use the zipline. There'll be an explosion as you descend down the wire, but don't worry. Simply drop off at the end and duck under the fat pipe to the left. After Lambert's message, climb up the black pole in front of you and when you reach as far as you can go, turn Sam around and jump onto the red pipe. Turn on your night vision and jump into the hole where the oil is flowing, trigger the conversation, and save.

■ OCTOBER 27, 2004, 09:47 HOURS

Find the ladder and open the hatch to trigger a cut-scene. Find the strut to the right with a set of rungs that you can climb up, and on arriving at the top, make your way around the platform until you see a blue coloured container or box. Climb onto it and leap up to the thin pipe overhead. Hand-over-hand to where the guard stops his patrol, and don't forget to raise your legs where necessary. When the guard returns and you're just above him, drop down onto to him and he'll be out cold. Go up the stairs and save.

■ OCTOBER 27, 2004, 10:03 HOURS

After the cut-scene and message from Lambert, walk forward to where the fire is and kill the two guards there. Turn left into a passageway and then head right towards the end. Just around the corner to the right there's a guard stood outside a room, so shoot him quickly or knock him out. Make sure the other two guards have walked away first, though. Now enter the building and get the medikit off the table, and then another one just around the corner in the cooking area with the gas on.

Exit the building and head left into an alleyway and make your way towards the

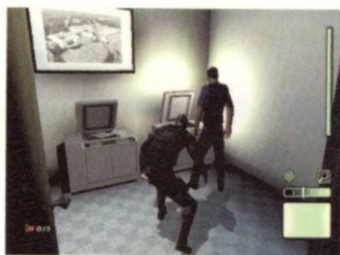
burning oil drum. Checkpoint. It's very easy to get badly chargrilled here, so jump up onto the red platform opposite where the logo on the container is, and walk forward until you can see a thin pipe above your head. Jump up and shimmy along through the window. Following the cut-scene, drop off the pipe and sneak up to the guard, knocking him out. Grab the ammo from the cabinet next to the smashed laptop and the medikit from the shelf behind. Exit through the open doorway up the stairs to watch another explosive cut-scene. Quickly kill the above and to the left of you by shooting the oil drum he's stupidly stood next to, and then shoot the other fellow nearer you on the deck. Check the corpses as usual and go toward the orange flame in the distance.

Now head right, then around the corner at the end to witness another cut-scene involving the briefcase courier. Go down the steps and open the gate to immediate left, and shoot the guard who's running back and forth like a moron. Enter the room on the left, pick up the medikit and go through the other door inside. After the message, turn left, then left again and you'll see the technician with the briefcase. Follow him left and he'll begin to cover. Knock him out.

MISSION 4: CIA HEADQUARTERS, LANGLEY, VIRGINIA, USA

■ OCTOBER 31, 2004, 22:19 HOURS

Head round the corner and wait in the shadows for the staff technician to wander across from the door on the right in the opposite room. Quickly sneak up on him and bosh him and then turn out the light. Dash back into the shadows and wait for the patrolling guard to come your way. You know what to do... Enter the room where the technician emerged and check his computer for the Technical Services room code: 7687. Head up to the intersection and go left to listen to the conversation. Head through the automatic door and wait until the guard faces towards the window before knocking him out. Use the terminal to attain the Storage Room code: 2977. Unpick the lock in the door to the right and get the medikit



HE'S BEHIND YOU Softly, softly spanky monkey...

inside before returning to take the right hand corridor at the intersection. Crouch between the two drinks dispensers, and before long, a man will appear from the door on the right, so let him pass you. If he sees you, whack him quickly.

There are a few more workers up ahead whom you can sneak up on and knock out at your own leisure. Input the Technical Services code (7687) on the keypad next to the door on the right. Careful, there's a guard in here, so stay in the shadows and bosh him when you get the chance. Turn out the lights, move into the next room and collect the medikit on the wall in front of you. Get the Backup Battery Power room code: 110598, and use it on the door to your right, and enter. Checkpoint. Sneak slowly down the stairs over on the right hand side and stealthily knock out one guard and two technicians. If they get alerted, just dash up the stairs and crouch in the dark, before knocking them out cold. Negotiate the twists and turns of the power room and leave by the open doorway. Head up the stairs into the brightly lit room and before worrying about how you're going to get past the camera covering the door ahead, pick up the SC-20K rifle and rounds, some ring airfoil rounds, and a sticky shocker from the shelf on your left. Fire an SC-20K round at the camera to knock it out of commission. Exit through the door at the end by entering the Storage Room code: 2977, and save.

■ OCTOBER 31, 2004, 22:50 HOURS

Sneak around the corner and put the chap by the Cola machine to sleep. Follow the corridor round to the left to another guard patrolling around the entrance to a large open plan area filled with TV screens. Knock him and another worker in the northwest corner of this area out, before looting their terminals for more data sticks. On one of them, you'll discover the code to the Main Server room door: 2019.

Leave this area and head over to the futuristic doors that look as though they've got lasers that'll tear you in half. Don't worry, they just look intimidating. Go through the left-hand door using your newly found key code (2019), and as soon as you get onto the balcony, shoot out the camera on the far wall. Follow the balcony round and drop down from the gap in the railings to the floor below. Access the computer to discover who the mole is along with a new (temporary) Main Server room code 110700, and while Lambert is still talking, quickly manoeuvre yourself behind the terminal pillar to the left. This way, you avoid being spotted by the technician who wanders in. Either avoid him completely or sneak



up behind him.

Exit the area back into the corridor or you'll have two or three guards hot on your tail. Checkpoint. Back in the corridor, continue on up until you arrive in an area with a couple of sofas to the right and a man (you can see his shadow) in a booth on the left. Pick up the bottle and head over to the entrance to his booth so that he still can't see you. Drop the bottle to make him suspicious and he'll try to come around and investigate. Let him leave his room and then quickly hop into his booth (don't walk through the metal detectors) and sneak up behind him before he gets a chance to open the door. Open the door yourself and skirt around to the right where it's more shadowy to avoid the two ceiling-mounted revolving security cameras. Hide in the northeast corner behind the plant to avoid being seen by the guard who emerges. Thumb him when he walks by and head down the corridor. Take the only route left down the sloping corridor and, staying hidden from the camera, shoot out the lights above.

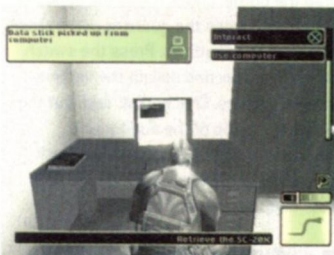
Now punch in the temporary code (110700), open the door and shuffle forward to the dark area in the room. Sneak up on the man having the phone conversation and knock him out. Now, head into the room with the automated machine-gun sentry plonked in the corner. To avoid being shot, shuffle along

the right hand edge and deactivate it. Pick up the three flares in this room, too, before exiting out of the other door and using the lift. Save.

■ OCTOBER 31, 2004, 23:04 HOURS

Walk up and slowly creep into the darkened room at the end of the corridor. Sit quietly by the cabinets on the left and allow one of the workers to leave after the tape conversation. Sneak towards the gap under the computer machine while ensuring that the man checking the screens to the left is facing away. Head through the doorway and stick to the left wall as it curves around to the right. Use the two terminals in the darkened area for data sticks and a sticky camera. Wait for Dougherty to leave the room at the end and access his computer.

Follow the corridor down to the right into the hallway where the guard is sat



LIGHTS OUT Switch to night vision where necessary.



and a surveillance camera is. Don't go down there! Instead go through the left door with the red light above it into a small cinema. Keep crouched and go down the central isle to avoid the projection beam giving you away. Switch to night vision and head right to where the guard is stood next to the door. Wait for him to move after the conversation first, though. Use the lock picks to get through the door and head left down the corridor past the two guards. At the end of the corridor, there's a locked room on the right, so use the lock picks and access the computer inside to get the code to the Retrieval Service door: 0614. Use this code on the double doors in the corridor outside. Go through and head for the Smoking room and grab Dougherty. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 1, 2004, 00:12 HOURS

Pick him up and drop him in the shadows to the right. Take out the guard and then carry Dougherty out and round the gangway to the exit. Hide him under the stairs and shoot out the camera on the wall near the doorway at the bottom. Head into the room containing the large, grey containers and knock out the guard. Carry Dougherty through the only exit to this room outside and dump him in a dark corner. Make your way down and use the elevator to reach the large open area below. Take out the patrolling guard and return for Dougherty. Take him down the wide ramp and dump him where the road signs are. Sneak along to where the truck is and knock out the guard – he's the one on the right. Now bring Dougherty over and drop him at the feet of the men. Mission complete.

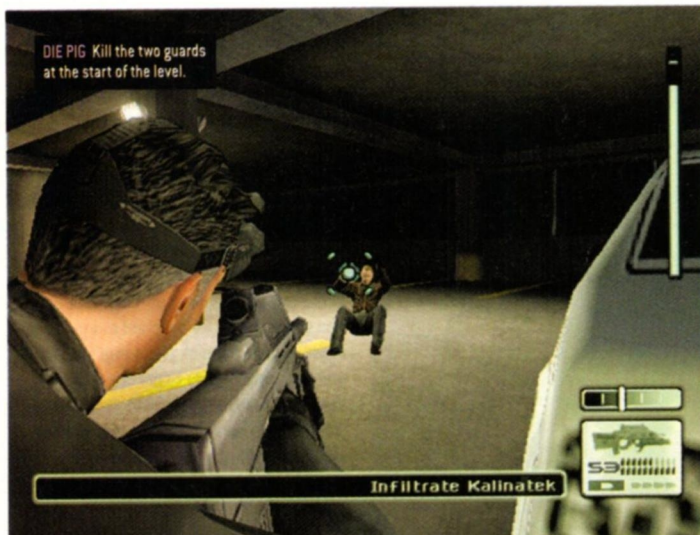
MISSION 5: KALINATEX BUILDING, LANGLEY, VIRGINIA, USA

■ NOVEMBER 1, 2004, 01:24 HOURS

Walk forward and hide while listening to the conversation. When one guard walks in the direction you came from, follow him and stealthily knock him out, and when the other guard appears, just shoot him. Head through the door on the left, switch to night vision, and collect the medikit up the stair. When you enter the next building, there are three guards patrolling and the lightning keeps giving your position away, so the best thing to do is just keep your night vision on and shoot them ASAP – use a frag grenade even. Check them for data sticks and enter the room, which leads out onto a crate suspended on a crane. Exit and save.

■ NOVEMBER 1, 2004, 01:33 HOURS

Enjoy the slide down the zipwire and listen to the oncoming message. On landing, turn around and leap onto the opposite building, and then find the black metal pin sticking up to rappel down the side of the building to the glass floor. Allow the conversation to end and then shoot out the glass panel below that you're stood on. Only do this and drop down into the corridor below when the guard's out of sight. Crouch behind the sofa and knock out the guard/search



him when he begins to walk away from you again. The code for the Security door is: 97531.

Head through the door on the right to trigger a message from Lambert, and then key in the code on the keypad to your right. Don't go through the metal detector! Now enter the room on the right, switch to night vision, quietly walk up to the cabinets on the far wall and climb up onto them. Make your way stealthily around the top of them to the duct entrance. Checkpoint. Follow the duct round to the cut-scene and drop down into the room containing a fish tank. Get the goodies and head for the door on the left, unlock it and go through. Use the optic camera to see where the guard is standing, unlock the door and plug him. Return to the fish tank room and take the right door. There are three guards to deal with here. Sneak up on the guard to the right, but alert the other two as you knock him out. Run back to the door you came from and they'll trigger the mine on the wall in trying to chase after you. Kaboom.... Search the bodies and head around the corner to the right. Exit and save by going into the room on the left.

■ NOVEMBER 1, 2004, 01:44

Drop out of the shaft, and rush behind the plant on the left. Let the shooting occur and take out the two guards causing the commotion. After searching them, get the sticky camera from off the table. Head for the next corridor and wait for the guard to stick a mine on the wall. One will disappear through a door, so shoot the other one when you get the opportunity. S-l-o-w-l-y walk up to the wall mine and disarm it. Go through the door on the left to where the prisoners are and sneak up on the guard. Disarm the mines and talk to the hackers for a new code: 33575. Damn, there's a timer countdown! Exit to the left, dash forward, take the first alcove to the right, and punch in the code. Head into the fire-filled office and make your way past the first wall-mounted mine on the door. Don't try to deactivate it, you'll waste too much time.

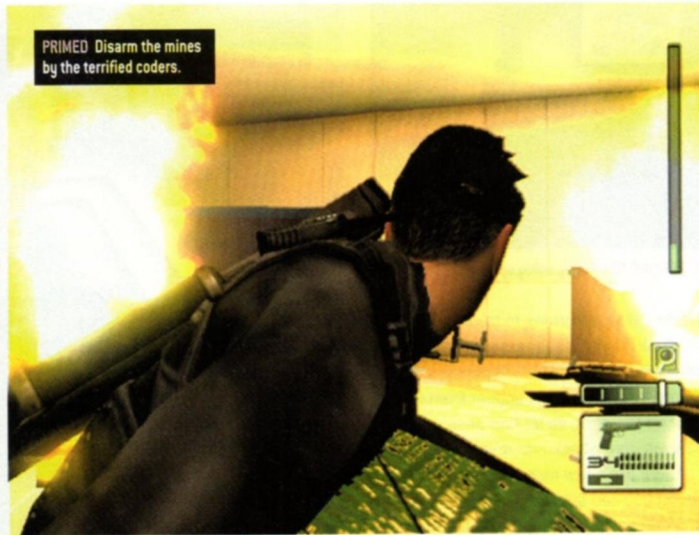
Head right and then to the back of the room. Turn left and quickly run to where the second mine is. Go past it slowly and quickly run out into the corridor again.

Run to the only exit on the left, head to the back of the dark room and go right. Quickly use the lock picks on the door nearby, collect the medikit on your left and clamber over the middle cabinet. The bomb's positioned on the wall at the end, so deactivate it quick sharp. Pick up the sticky camera and return over the cabinets. Checkpoint. Watch the pattern of the guard who appears out of the room and knobble him. If another guard appears soon after, hide in the shadows and shoot him. Search the first guard for ammo and hide the bodies. Head into the auditorium and follow the left hand side to the staircase. After the cut-scene, run back up to the shadows where you appeared as you're being hunted. Shoot the two guards as they appear, and get a medikit from the satchel. Head back down to where the cut-scene was to find the final guard. First shoot the bulb, and then grab the bottle. Chuck it into the opposite corner, and when the guard appears shoot him from the shadows. Press the switch on the fuse box and collect the various strewn goodies. Checkpoint. Take out the guard at the top of the auditorium staircase and get his satchel. The Back Door code is 1250, so use it on the door outside the auditorium.

■ NOVEMBER 1, 2004, 01:56 HOURS

Get yourself seen so that the guards come rushing down, and shoot them in the head as they stand on the stairs from the shadows. Unlock the door on the left at the top of the stairs and collect the items inside. Check the recreation room on the right for a disposable pick as well. Unlock the next door on the right for some sticky shockers. Enter the first aid room for a conversation and a medikit. Quickly dispatch the guard who suddenly appears in the corridor outside, and then search the glass-fronted room to use the red terminal. Checkpoint.

Sneak into the dark area on the right and shoot the two guards. Exit through the other door and then use the optic cable on the next door to see a cut-scene. Enter the toilet on the right, sneak along the air duct and quickly shoot the guard in the head. Get the encryption key from Ivan and leave. Use the elevator and save in the next room.



■ NOVEMBER 1, 2004, 02:02 HOURS

Climb up onto the boxes to your right and sneak to quite near the edge. Lob a frag grenade over the edge and finish them off with a few shots afterwards. Exit through the door near where they were stood. Hide behind the crate in front of you and lob another grenade at the two guards who appear before exiting. Checkpoint.

Cling to the side of the wall on the right in order to squeeze through the narrow gap. Lob a grenade through the window, and mop up the other guards in this area. Climb the ladder in the corner and drop down onto the crates. Get the medikit and exit out the door. Checkpoint. Go up the small stairs to the grey door, go through and take out the three guards in the next area. Use frag grenades and sniping to polish 'em off. Exit the area and save.

■ NOVEMBER 1, 2004, 02:07 HOURS

Night vision on, creep up behind the guard and get him. Go up to the door on the right and use the optic cable. Watch the guard walk off, and then open the door, head through the opening on the right and pick up the medikit. Make your way around and shoot barrels where necessary to take out groups of guards. Eventually, you'll get to the scaffolding area where you can see your ride out of here – the Osprey. Dash over to the ladder, and just as you're about to climb up, quickly take out the two guards who appear. Make your way around to the Chopper and take out the final guard hidden behind the crate before leaping onto the back of the Osprey. Mission over.

MISSION 6: NADEZHDA NUCLEAR PLANT, KOLA, RUSSIA



MUGGED Grab the rogue scientist for the door code.

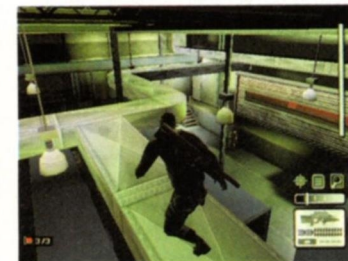
■ NOVEMBER 6, 2004, 19:50 HOURS

Drop down onto the guard at the end of the platform ahead-and-to-the-right, but don't let the camera catch you out. Go into the caged area to the left of the stairs, slide open the window and leave. Avoid or tackle the guards patrolling outside. Two of them can be killed by shooting the valve on the tank positioned next to a door just around the corner. The green gas leak will do the trick. Enter through the door and take out the patrolling guard. There's a medikit in the room at the end of the corridor. Exit and pick the lock on the door to the right. Checkpoint. Pick up the flare in the room in front and notice the pipe just to the left of the door outside. Before climbing up, climb over the fence where the pipes are on the right and collect the goodies on the ground.

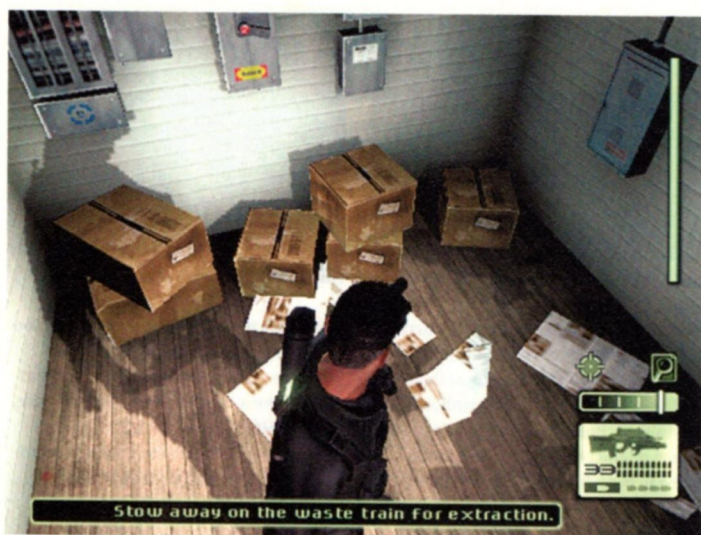
Return over the fence and climb up the pipe next to the door onto the first roof. Now climb up another pipe to the next roof and avoid/shoot out the searchlight. Finally, climb up onto the third roof and exit through the small opening on the left. At the other end crouch down, allow the conversation to finish and then shoot the guard above you. When the other guard rushes over, shoot him as well. Climb out, destroy the camera, and go through the door for a medikit and frag grenade. Unlock the other door and drop down into the vent on the right. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 6, 2004, 20:22 HOURS

After the conversation, drop off the top on the right and onto the ground below. Make your way under the floor, through the smoke and to an opening on the left. Time the manoeuvre so that the guard doesn't see you shoot out the camera to your left. Quickly climb out and crouch in the corner



VENTING Quietly drop down and mug the two guards.



to the left where the three pipes are running, and shoot him when he returns and walk around the corner. Walk left down the corridor to trigger the worker. Hide, then follow him back and knock him out. Enter the room opposite his terminal and sneak up on the guard – cosh him. Get the medikit and head back down the corridor and head left. Shoot out the light bulb to avoid the camera's stare or jam it. In the room to the right, there's a medikit.

Return to the main corridor and deal with the camera on the far wall, before dropping into another vent. Checkpoint. Go right into the open area and after the cut-scene shoot the guard who appears from the doorway above you on the gangway to the right. Hide in the tunnel before returning. Wait for the right moment and interrogate Effir. He'll give you the code for the Cooling Rod control room: 560627. Go through the silvery sliding door on the right and then into the next room, knock out the technician and get the medikit off the wall.

Return to the corridor and deal with the camera, guard and two technicians. There's another camera to disable at the other end of the corridor, too. Head left at the end. Checkpoint. Input the code you got and creep down the stairwell to the shadows below. Take out the first camera on the wall in front of you, and sneak up on the technician from the left hand side when he heads over to the second monitor. Knock him out and then take out the second camera, before accessing all the terminals to complete 100 percent meltdown. After the cut-scene, hide and take out the single guard who rushes in. Head back up the stairwell, exit out into the corridor and through the newly open security door to the left. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 6, 2004, 20:38 HOURS

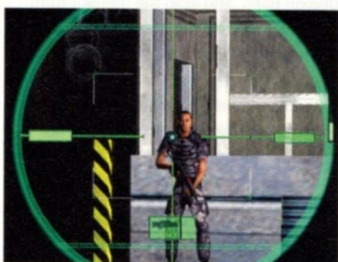
Creep up to the room at the top of the stairs. Go around a couple of corridors and dash into the open doorway to avoid being shot at by the auto-gun sentry. Take out the guard, and note the open vent above left where he was standing. Interrogate the technician below, and then climb up into that vent. Drop into the room and pick up the flare, medikit and SC-20K ammo. Leave through the door in the small hallway. Head left and disable

the IFF on the auto-gun sentry, and watch the fireworks. Disable it, and check the bodies. Now input the code from the data stick you previously found: 151822. Checkpoint. Pick up the chemical flares farther around, then crouch and go through the hole in the broken glass ahead of you. Make your way through the office quickly to avoid the auto-gun sentry and get the medikit on the wall to the left. Go as far to the left hand side as you can into the last office, and then dash out into the middle of the floor area turning immediately to your left up and behind the sentry. Deactivate it, leave through the only exit, take out the camera, and exit through the next door. Checkpoint. Use the optic cable, and then deal with the guards outside. Go through the green-lit computer room and take the door on the left. While the man's talking, sneak up and interrogate him about three times. Use the computer and save.

■ NOVEMBER 6, 2004, 21:09 HOURS

Go down two corridors and dispatch the guards patrolling the stairs. Get the data stick from the computer in the corridor, and a medikit from the room on the right. Punch in the code (795021) on the keypad to the door at the end of the corridor when Grimsdottir downloads it for you. Checkpoint. Drop down the hole, leap forward onto the wire, and head out onto the top of the ventilation network. Deal with the two guards below by shooting them, drop down and exit through the only door. Mission complete.

MISSION 7: CHINESE EMBASSY, YANGON, MYANMAR



■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 20:13 HOURS

Talk to your new contact and, remember, you can't kill anyone. Head up the alley to the right, and climb up and over onto the wall. Hide in the niche to the left and get the drop on the passing guard. Climb back up from where you came from and get the can. Distract the guard at the other end by chucking the can against one of the white mini skips, and get the drop on him, too. Head left to the room where the burning oil drum is and climb up the ladder in the corner. Checkpoint. Drop down quietly into the next area and either avoid the two guards to reach the other end of the street or stealthily take them out. If you'd rather be even stealthier, from your entrance point, climb up the ladder in front of you on the scaffolding, and follow it across and then up again. Walk right to the end and then look above you. Hand-over-hand to the other side using the wire to the other side.

Drop off the wire, shoot out the bulb and get the medikit. Sneak round the building's edge to the left until you come to the hole and a ladder. Climb down and quietly drop down to the ground. Go left a little, and climb up the drainpipe into the next area. Go down the alleyway and turn left at the end. You need to make your way to the manhole on the other side of the wooden fence while avoiding/knocking out the two guards. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 20:50 HOURS

Go straight ahead, then left to take out the guard who appears at the end. Go right to take out the next guard. There's one more guard in the system that needs avoiding or knocking out. Now go left, past the barrel half blocking the way, and head for the brightly lit tunnel section. Keep going and eventually you'll see a ladder leading up to another manhole.

Checkpoint. Dispatch the two guards stood nearby, and then climb up the ladder on the nearby scaffold. At the top, jump up and hand-over-hand to the other side on the pipe. Go through the window. Climb up the pipe and talk to your contact. Take the map and pick up the medikit and ammo. Walk up the tiny set of steps and rappel to the bottom. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 21:22 HOURS

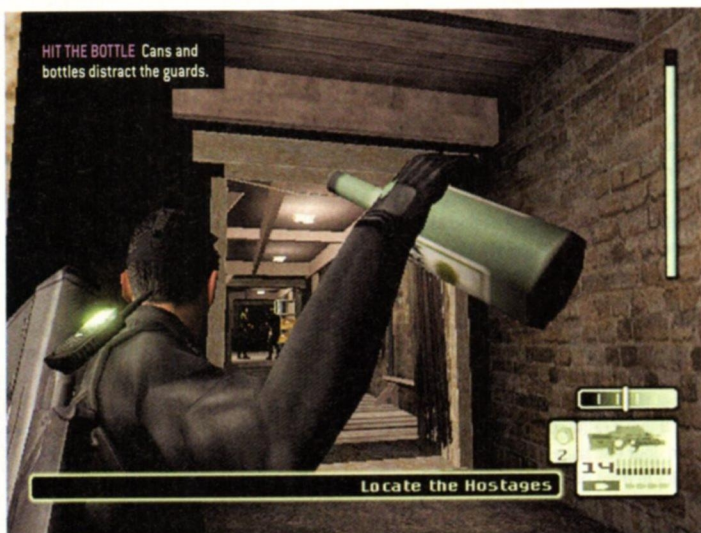
Quickly head into the room on the right and knock out the guard when he passes by. Try to avoid the other guard and make your way down the alley into the more open area. Climb the ladder where the light bulb is shining through in the left hand corner, walk along a bit and then climb the other ladder that's set against the wall on the left. Enter the building, and make your way along until you can see a guard patrolling the well-lit interior. Checkpoint. Knock him out and get the data stick. Climb up onto the box and use the zipline off the balcony. Head forward and sneak up on the guard who's patrolling the dead end blockade. About turn and walk back then go right down the narrow alley to where a couple of ladders are. There's a single guard patrolling here who needs taking out. Forget the ladders and hop up over the bin to a save point.

■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 21:56 HOURS

Run to the end of the alley, turn right and walk behind the van to the right in order to get the drop on the patrolling guard. Now cling to the shadows on the right to avoid the gaze of the camera next to where the embassy truck is. You should approach underneath it from the right and slip quietly by the truck and man in the guardhouse to the left, and wait for it to drive off. Now sneak up on the guard and knock him out. To get the second guard, dash over to the dark area to the left of where he squats down to look under the truck, and then time the move to knock him out on his return patrol.

Now head up to where the truck is parked and sneak up on the guard patrolling along the side of the embassy. Checkpoint. Equip the laser mic and walk over to the right of the embassy where the ornamental building is and keep walking slowly towards the guardhouse. After the cut-scene, point the laser mic at the left hand window to catch the conversation. And when the general moves into his car, get the rest of his cosy chat by using the mic again. Wait until the guard begins his new patrol and head over to the left of the building and sneak past him to the long wall in front of you. There's a pipe to climb over about half way along it. Mission complete.





MISSION 8: MOUKE TSOE BO MEATS, YANGON, MYANMAR

■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 22:52 HOURS

Take out the patrolling guards in the area, and go through the door at the end. Checkpoint. Leave and switch to thermal sensing and pop a cap in the guard on the gangway above you when he stands still. Try to snipe the guy wielding the searchlight at the other end too and then the searchlight itself. Now all you need to do is stay away from the slowly pulsing thermal circles (mines) and make your way to the other end. If your path is blocked, simply climb over one of the square skips. At the other end, turn off your thermal imaging; head right into the well-lit area. Get the medikit and the SC-20K ammo, and climb onto the right hand skip in the corner. Wall jump up and over the gap at the top. Checkpoint. In the roof area, follow the beam across the middle, and then to the right where the sign is. Don't tread on the corrugated roof or you'll alert the guards. Leap up onto the bar that spans from one side of the sign to the other and shimmy across it. Now jump up and hand-over-hand down the wire. Hop up over the mesh fence and access the antenna to cut off the broadcast.

After the cut-scene, take out the onrushing guard, grab his data stick, and unlock the door in front of you. Once inside, use the door code from the data stick (770215) on the door to your immediate right. Descend the stairs and creep out onto a darkened balcony. Climb up onto the barrel on the left, jump up onto the metal beam, lift your legs up and make your way to the other side where the guard is finishing having a slash. While he's washing his hands, drop down and knock him out. Now creep along just enough so that you can see the opposite wall next to the leftmost cubicle and fire off a distraction cam. From it you should be able to see the guard stood there. Press the distract/create noise button and when he comes over to investigate, gas him. Now head left, and at the next door, open it to sneak up and interrogate the sitting guard. Return to the corridor and drop through the hole where the grating is. Follow the passage round and

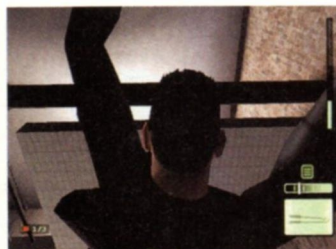
very quietly head over to the opening in the ceiling. Either drop down and knock out the two guards or plug them both with hot lead. Drop down and head for the freezers. Checkpoint.

Switch to thermal imaging and take out the two guards in first area. Go through the flaps into the next room and you should be able to spot the auto-gun sentry in the northwest corner. Approach along the left hand side and get to it by climbing over the cabinets blocking your way. Deactivate it, and exit through the flaps. There are two more guards to dispose of in this room, and the room after that features an auto-gun sentry to your immediate left, so as soon as its gun is pointing away dash around and disable the IFF. If you're lucky it'll take out the guard. If not, turn to your left and plug him yourself when he appears. You should now disable the gun and get the medikit from the table then take the exit to the east. Checkpoint.

Follow the route up to where the guard is vigilantly patrolling back and forth. Hide yourself behind the fallen shelf and pounce on him as he goes by. Grab and drag the guard back through the flaps in the next room, whilst plugging the second guard if he follows you. Knock out the guard you're holding, and then enter the room and drop into the hole on the left hand side. Climb out, get the medikit, and head down the stairs. Time the moment to knock out the guard and press the switch next to the metal shutters to open them. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 23:37 HOURS

Creep along to emerge on the right in an animal stable-like area. Quietly hide by the trough in front-and-to-the-left to catch the passing guard by surprise. Get his data stick, collect the SC-20K ammo and exit the stable. Head left, pick up the flare on the boxes and exit to the lighter area outside. Pick up the SC-20K ammo and the bottle off the oil drum, and use the latter to distract the two chattering guards. Shoot them as they approach and collect another data stick. Halfway down the corridor, there's an auto-gun sentry in the stall on the left, so go into the stall prior to this one and climb up onto the shelf at the back to get round and deactivate it. To pass the next auto-gun



KNOCK KNOCK Drop down when he's finished peeing.

sentry, simply dash by when the muzzle is pointing away from you. Checkpoint. Get the medikit and the bottle at the end, and then go through the flag embossed with a bull's head. Chuck the bottle behind you to distract the guards, hide in the niche to the left and then sneak by or shoot them. Keep going until you reach the checkpoint. You eventually arrive in a large stable area, with two sentry guns at the other end. Disable them for now and go through the entrance to the left. Talk to the American hostages and then talk to the Chinese hostages in the room to the right, not forgetting to pick up the medikit and two frag grenades as you go. Quickly dash back to the auto-gun sentries and disable the IFF, and turn to face the other way. The guns will take out half of the attackers; you can finish off the rest. Lob a grenade at Grinko at the other end of the stable where you first entered.

MISSION 9: CHINESE EMBASSY, YANGON, MYANMAR

■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 00:11 HOURS

There are two ways into the restaurant, but we advise taking the back route (behind you) into the kitchen area instead the main entrance ahead. Use the optic cable to see the chef's movements, and then sneak into the kitchen and knock him out. Climb up the ladder in the northwest corner of the kitchen. After the message, head up onto the roof and cross the wooden planks. Checkpoint. Wait until the guard comes to the window and then walks away before going through the door. Hide in the shadows and nab him next time he circles around. Get his 5.72mm ammo and the gibberish data stick, and then exit around the back to the balcony outside. Climb up the pipe, and enjoy the automatic zipline ride when you reach the top. Hand-over-hand around the building until you eventually come to an open window. Climb the pipe to get inside.

Open the trap and note that you'll attract attention from the guard below when you drop down, so be prepared to shoot him quickly. Sneak through the red dragon flaps, and grab the medikit from the box on the left. Go through the hole on the wall and cling to the metal pipes so that you can squeeze through to the other side. Checkpoint. Climb down the pipe through the hole in the corner, and on arrival at the bottom, cling to the next set of metal pipes and squeeze through to the other side. You'll hear some shooting, but just keep going and either wait for the two guards to leave or shoot them both there and then. A quick grenade will kill



CHOKED Interrogate people when given the option.

them both if you let them go and they see you through the glass. Access the red computer in the next room with the glass frontage for a message from Lambert. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 00:47 HOURS

Through the door with the yellow Chinese writing on, there's a medikit. Now go through the following door and sneak up the metal stairwell. Guards patrol in the corridor outside and there's also a security camera whirring away. Wait for one guard to stand with his back to you and then go up and grab (not knock out) him. His patrolling mate will come out to investigate, so use your hostage as a shield, and shoot his mate in the head. Nice move, eh? Go through the only exit, shoot out the lights in the next room, and shoot the two guards who come rushing in. Leave through the open doorway. Checkpoint. Get the medikit next to the bed on the left, and keep going until you hear the conversation between the two guards. Quickly use the thermal imaging camera and access the keypad to ascertain what the combination is. If you missed it, it's 1436. Now use your optic cable to spot the auto-gun sentry on the right. Open the door and wait for the muzzle to point away from you and dash around to the right, taking out the guard there as well. Disable the door and climb up onto the archway above you.

At the top of the balcony, switch off the IFF on the next auto-gun sentry, and quickly climb back down. It'll shoot the approaching guard. Return to the top, disable the gun and check the body, before exiting through the door on the left at the end of the landing. Get the medikit in the room where the Buddha is and return to the disabled gun sentry. Behind the flag, there's a rail running along the flag, so jump up and hand-over-hand about three-quarters of the way across. Let the guard with the red beret let the other grunt through the door (he'll use the retinal scanner), and when he's facing away continue across, drop down on the other side and go and grab him. Force him to use the retinal scanner and exit through the door. Kill the guard in the following room, use the computer and exit through the window. Save

■ NOVEMBER 12, 2004, 01:20 HOURS

Immediately creep along through the archway and into the ditch on the left. You may have to deal with the guard dog and the two guards, but it shouldn't be a problem. Keep going and go through the gate at the end. Snipe the guard, shoot out the security camera, and go through the door. Checkpoint. Get the medikit inside on the wall and go through the door there. In the storage depot, make your

way through the gap and climb up to the next level, making note of the guard who uses a keypad to access the door at the other end. Drop out the other side, and use your thermal imaging to read what the code on the keypad is [9753 if you're struggling]. Once inside, there's a lone guard stood with his back to you at a doorway. Fool. Go up and grab (not kill) him and use him as a human shield while you kill his two mates. Checkpoint. Take out the camera immediately to your right in the next room. Be careful of the second security camera on the opposite wall behind the shelves ahead of you at the other end of the warehouse. Take it out and climb up the high gangway by first climbing onto the box next to the camera. Exit outside, and after the cut-scene, quickly sprint around to the part of the gangway where you can see the two trucks. If you've got one, lob a grenade between them to blow them up. If not, dash down the stairs and into the room to the right and shoot the pump before they drive off. The effect is the same, ie, a huge explosion. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 11, 2004, 01:51 HOURS

Quietly sneak up behind the patrolling guard, knock him out, and return to the shadows. Although another guard comes along to investigate automatically, he becomes distracted. Don't by any means kill him or it's game over, follow him instead. Get the medikit from the end of the corridor near the door. Go through the door, and switch to thermal imaging to read the keypad code [1456]. Wait for a while so that the guard can disappear and then punch the code in and enter. Use the elevator to go up and then switch to the thermal imager again to read the keypad code on the next door [1834]. There's nothing through the red flapping door cover, so head right and use your thermal imaging for the last time to read the keypad code [7921]. Checkpoint. The door is jammed to the left, so sneak around the corner to the right where Feirong is sitting and watch the cut-scene. Interrogate him several times by grabbing him when you get the opportunity. Now drag him over to the computer and use it. After Lambert's congratulatory message, depart through the door that was previously jammed. Dash through the burning flags, right though the door, down the burning stairwell and out through the window. Finally, head towards the waiting Osprey. Mission complete.

MISSION 10: GEORGIAN PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, T'BLISI, GEORGIA

■ NOVEMBER 13, 2004, 00:04 HOURS

Although it's a different matter once you set foot inside the Palace, don't set off any alarms while trying to get in or you fail the mission. Turn your night vision goggles on, and if you insist on taking out the guard, pick up the bottle to the right about halfway along the path and distract him. Shoot out the searchlight too if that helps before knocking him out. Now head over to the smoking black vent and rappel

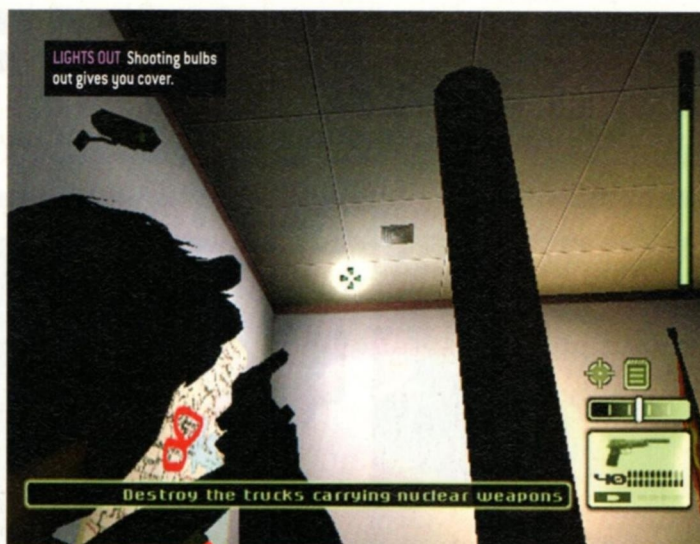
down the side of the cliff to the tunnel entrance below. Turn on the thermal imaging to see the cross beams pulsing slowly on and off. Walk past them only when they go off. Turn right and then go through the next two. Now jump up to the bar above you and pull your legs up to pass the first of the beams around the next corner. And time your way through the final two ahead. Quietly manoeuvre up to the wall mine beeping away on the left wall and disarm it. Position yourself under the ladder and climb up the ladder above you in the tunnel. Checkpoint.

Climb out and run forward to attract the guard, and hide in the shadows before plugging him. Now walk very stealthily up to where he came out and hug the left side of the entrance as you enter the mini maze. His dog should run towards you, but run out of the entrance at the last second. You can either shoot the dog as it sniffs around or leave it. Check the guard for a data stick with the code [2126] to the garden gate. Head left into the maze and dodge around the two armoured cameras until you arrive in the near the main entrance with a fountain. Approach the keypad to the main gate from the right hand side and punch in 2126. Go left and slide open the grating where the shadow of the bat or moth is. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 13, 2004, 00:25 HOURS

Pick up the disposable pick and shoot the light bulb, and then go up the stairs. Pick up the medikit from the table and use the optic cable under the door (we suggest you do this a lot in this building) and open it. Wait for the two guards to emerge and switch to thermal imaging. You'll notice that the door you need to go through can only be approached virtually head on, so take out the two unfortunates in your way. Exit through the door and keep the thermal imaging on for now. There's a beam at the bottom and top of this set of stairs, so jump on to the brown square object to the right of the door and grab a hold of the wooden rail. Shimmy along to the left and then Sam will automatically move across to the next rail around the corner. Keep going until you clear the first beam. Drop off and walk up the stairs a bit and then jump up to the banister on the right of the stairs and pull yourself up and over onto the floor above.

Open and exit through the only door and head over to the next one in front of you. Unlock it and go inside to get a disposable pick. Return to the corridor, past the yellow wet floor sign and to the door at the end. Checkpoint. Use the optic cable again to witness another cut-scene, and then enter. Snipe the two elite guards who patrol the stairways and hide their bodies downstairs. Get a data stick from one of them for a code to the door at the top of the stairs. Head up to that door on the left and key in 70021. Checkpoint. There are three guards patrolling around three different paths in the next area, so if you alert one guard, they'll all come running for a piece of the action. Be careful and take them out one at a time. At the bottom of the stairs, there's a medikit. When you've sorted out all of the guards and checked them for data sticks,



OPTICAL. Looking under doors is absolutely crucial.

head down the hallway towards the right that has a rotating security camera. If you can see the flashing red light it means that the camera is pointing in your direction. Time your movements to give yourself enough time to unlock the door at the end before the camera pans around to you again. Checkpoint.

Switch to thermal imaging again, crouch down and dash between the lines of beams when they disappear for a couple of seconds. To get past the next two, wait until the top one goes off and then simply jump over the bottom one. Sneak up and knock out the guard stood with his back to you, use the computer and get the medikit from the other room. Return through the beam traps, avoid the rotating camera again and head to the doors on the left and use the optic cable to see the brief cut-scene. Open the door, shoot the guard, and time your run past another rotating security camera to the door on the far side. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 13, 2004, 00:42 HOURS

Ensure you take out this guard in here, because he's got some much-needed SC-20K ammo. There's also another [petrified] worker in here that needs putting to sleep – no need to kill him, mind. Exit east through the doorway and go down the stairs. Now prepare yourself for easily the toughest firefight in the game so far. The three crack marksmen in the library are a real pain in the arse, as they can cut you to pieces in seconds.

Make sure your ammo clip is as full as possible. First crouch down and shoot out the two round bulbs to darken everything up a bit. Now rush in and immediately run into the left hand corner and hide. Eventually one of the elite guards will appear on the balcony above you, and

you've simply got to be ruthless and shoot him dead – snipe him if you've got time. The other two will dig in behind the shelves in front of you. Nip in and out to get their positions and cut them down. Check their bodies for data sticks and go through one of the entrances positioned either side of the stairs. Checkpoint. Go down another level, sneak up on Nikoladze, interrogate him a couple of times, and use the retinal safe. After the next cut-scene, set your night vision on, and prepare the SC-20K for action – don't equip yet or you'll be shot on the spot. When the blackout occurs, quickly shoot the man stood near you squarely in the head. Now shuffle right and snipe the next guard who appears from behind the pillar. Finally, snipe the guard on the left. There's one more guard to kill in the library before going west through the door. Save.

■ NOVEMBER 13, 2004, 01:06 HOURS

Now you've got permission to kill Nikoladze – Hallelujah! Sneak up on the guard patrolling the ground to the right, and then climb up the squeaky pipe on the left to take out the next guard. Unlock the door at the end, head right, listen to Lambert and collect all the ammo. Take a deep breath and assassinate Nikoladze with one shot to the head. Quickly turn around and take out the guard who appears through the doorway. Checkpoint. Go down the stairs past the door where the guards are approaching and crouch down in the corner until all the hullabaloo has died down.

Enter the dining hall and get the drop on the guard with his back turned, and take him to a dark area to cosh. Get the medikit from his satchel and continue into the dining area. Staying left, go up to the cabinet, climb up onto it and jump over to the balcony. Open the door and keep left as you come to the stairs at the other end of the area. There are a couple of guards acting as the welcoming committee, so sneakily climb over the railing and fall quietly behind them. Head for the door and you've finished the game. At last you get to see your daughter. It brings a tear to our eyes, it does....

That's it you've completed all ten levels of *Splinter Cell*.

MINI TIPS



CHEATS NEVER PROSPER. BUT THEY DO GET BIG HEAD MODES, SECRET COSTUMES AND FLOATY CARS.

DEVIL MAY CRY 2



MUST DIE MODE

Complete the game on the Hard difficulty setting with either character to unlock this Ultra-hard mode.

EXTRA OUTFITS FOR LUCIA

1st Outfit - Complete game with Lucia.
2nd Outfit - Complete the game with Lucia using Hard difficulty.
3rd Outfit - Complete the game with Lucia using Must Die difficulty.

EXTRA OUTFITS FOR DANTE

1st Outfit - Complete game with Dante.
2nd Outfit - Complete the game with Dante using Must Die difficulty.

BLOODY PALACE

Complete the game with both characters to get Bloody Palace.

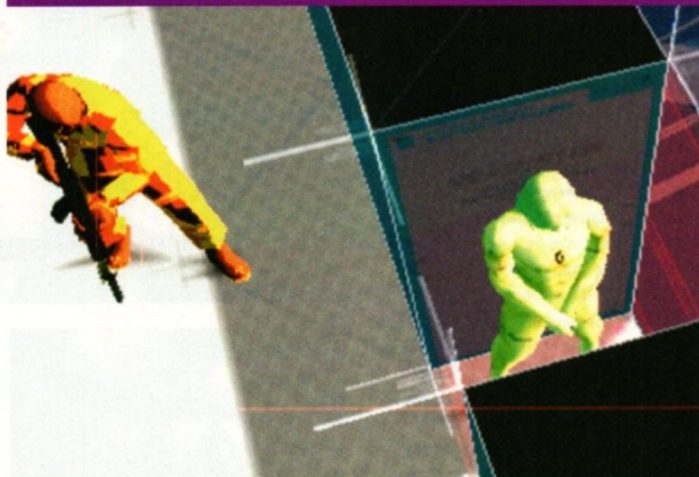
BLOODY PALACE 2

Complete the game with both characters on Must Die Difficulty to get Bloody Palace 2.

ARIUS' SECRETARY

To play as Arius' secretary, you have to complete the game in Lucia Must Die mode.

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE



NINJA RAIDEN IN VR MODE

Complete half of the VR missions with Raiden to unlock his Ninja form.

NAKED RAIDEN

Complete all of Ninja Raiden's missions in VR mode.

PLISKIN IN VR MODE

Finish half of Snake's VR missions to play as Pliskin.

TUXEDO SNAKE IN VR MODE

Complete all of Pliskin's VR missions and you'll be rewarded with Snake in his tux.

ORIGINAL METAL GEAR SOLID SNAKE IN VR MODE

Complete all of Tuxedo Snake's missions in VR mode to get the original Snake.

INFINITE AMMO FOR TANKER MISSION

Get 40 dog tags in the Tanker mission and complete it. After viewing your Clear Code you will unlock the bandana, which gives you infinite ammo. Save your game, then load your save data to start a new game with the bandana.

SNAKE TALES ENDINGS

Beat one of the snake tales to unlock the M9. Use it to stun the bosses rather than killing them. If you stun them all, you'll get a new ending.

PHOTOGRAPH MODE (SNAKE VR MISSIONS)

Finish all of the levels in Bomb Disposal mode, Eliminate mode and Hold Up mode (Alternative missions) to unlock Photograph mode.

BOSS SURVIVAL MODE

Complete both the Plant and Tanker missions on any difficulty level.

CASTING THEATER MODE

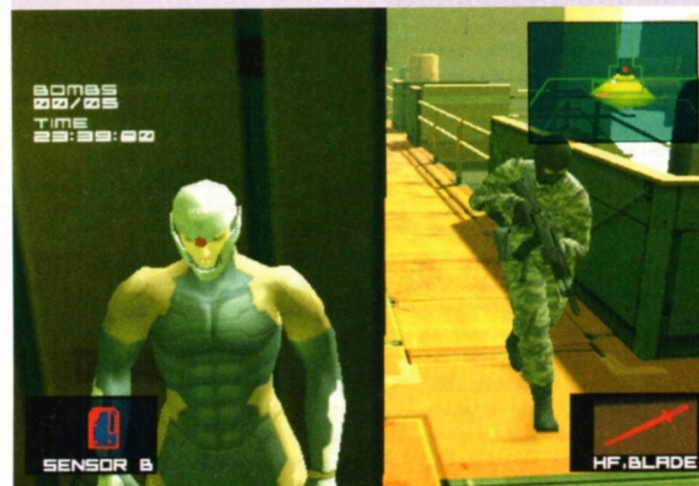
Complete both the Plant and Tanker missions on any difficulty level.

STEALTH FOR TANKER MISSION

Gather a total of 80 dog tags in the Tanker mission, and stealth will be unlocked for it.

CAMERA MODE FOR TANKER MISSION

Complete the Tanker mission on any difficulty level.



SILENT SCOPE 3



REAL-TIME WINDOW

Get a grade of S or better in the shooting range. Turn on 'Real Time Window' in EX Options. This keeps the scope view in the upper left hand corner of the screen.

PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUOUS MODES

Beat every EX mission to get to Professional and Continuous mission mode in the EX Options. Professional mode has no target alerts; Continuous mission mode has no dialogue.

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS



ALL MULTIPLAYER MISSIONS

Enter **JORG SACUL** as a bonus code.

BATTLE DROID IN GEONOSIS ACADEMY

Enter **TRADEFED** as a bonus code.

WOOKIE IN GEONOSIS ACADEMY

Enter **NERFHERDER** as a bonus code.

BONUS OBJECTIVES COMPLETED

Enter **GIMME** as a bonus code.

SINGLE PLAYER LEVEL SELECT

Enter **DOORDONOT** as a bonus code.

DEVELOPER TEAM PHOTOS

Enter **JEDICOUNCIL** as a bonus code.

INVINCIBILITY

Enter **DARKSIDE** as a bonus code.

PADME AMIDALA IN GEONOSIS ACADEMY

Enter **NATALIE** as a bonus code.

UNLIMITED AMMUNITION

Enter **SUPERLASER** as a bonus code.

SEGA BASS FISHING DUEL



BONUS LURES

Select tournament mode and catch the largest fish of the day to unlock the bonus lures.

REELING IN BIG FISH

When you catch a very big fish, if the tension bar goes red do not reel it in immediately. Make circular motions with the analogue stick and the fish will tire as you pull it in.

GUITY GEAR X2



EX CHARACTERS

On the main menu, hold down **L2** and select Arcade or MOM modes.

GOLD CHARACTERS

Hold down **L2** to fight against Gold characters. Robo Ky, Kliff, and Justice will also appear as opponents.

EX AND SP MODES

Get Story mode endings one and two for a character to unlock its EX mode; unlock all three of a character's Story mode endings to unlock their SP mode.

MIDNIGHT CARNIVAL STAGE

Place your cursor on 'random' select, then press **R2**. When the match begins you'll now get "Boss stage" (EX I-No stage, the Midnight carnival).

STAGE SELECT FOR TRAINING AND VS MODE

In the character's menu screen press **R2** on the character's portrait where you want to battle, a yellow box will appear confirming your choice

UNLOCK ROBO KY, KLIFF, AND JUSTICE

Play the Survival Mode. Robo Ky suddenly appears at Level 210, Kliff at Level 220, and Justice at Level 230. Defeat each one to unlock them. You can also play the Mission mode for 40 missions or Story mode and finish all 60 endings to unlock the characters. But if you're slightly more lazy, you can just leave your PS2 in training mode for a total of 96 hours, and they'll magically become unlocked.

REIGN OF FIRE



LEVEL SELECT

At the main menu, enter **△, □, ○, ○, △, □, △, □, △, □**.

LEVEL SKIP

At the main menu, enter **□, △, □, △, △, □, △, □, △, □**.

INVINCIBILITY

While playing a game, enter **×, △, △, △, ○, △, △, △, ○, ○**.

EXTRA DAMAGE

While playing a game, enter **×, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △**.

BURN EVERYTHING

While playing a game, enter **□, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △**.

GOAT MODE

While playing a game, enter **△, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △, △**.

MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE



UNLOCKING CHARACTERS

Here's the amount of koins you'll need, and the name of the coffin they're in.

Cyrax (3003 Platinum Koins) - CN

Drahmin (6500 Sapphire Koins) - UR

Frost (208 Ruby Koins) - IV

Hsu Hao (3317 Jade Koins) - MW

Jax (3780 Ruby Koins) - SA

Kitana (2931 Sapphire) - KI

Nitara (4022 Gold Koins) - TI

Raiden (3116 Jade Koins) - XG

Reptile (3822 Gold Koins) - LL

UNLOCK BLAZE AND MOKAP

To select Blaze, highlight Raiden on the character select screen and enter **△** and **×**. To select Mokap, highlight Cyrax on the character select screen and enter **△** and **×**.

VEXX



INVINCIBILITY

At the Options Menu, select Cheats and enter **XXEVREWOP**.

LEVEL SELECT

At the Options Menu, select Cheats and enter **XXEVPRAW**.

SUPER JUMP

At the Options Menu, select Cheats and enter **XXEVN00M**.

HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING



REFILL HEALTH

Press **R2, L2, R1, ○, △, L2, ×, ○** during gameplay.

MYSTIC HEROES



COLLECT ALL RUNES

- SM1:** Beat Story mode on the Easy setting.
- M2:** Beat Versus mode with four human characters.
- M3:** Beat Story mode on Normal.
- M4:** Complete ten Co-operative multiplayer matches.
- M5:** Complete 20 Non-Versus competitive matches.
- M6:** Complete 20 Co-operative multiplayer matches.
- M7:** Complete 50 versus mode matches.
- M8:** Beat Story mode on Hard.
- M9:** Beat the game with all characters on any of the difficulty levels.
- S1:** Complete the first four levels of Survival mode.
- S2:** Complete the first eight levels of Survival mode.
- S3:** Complete the first 12 levels of Survival mode.
- S4:** Complete the first four levels of Expert Survival mode.
- S5:** Complete the first eight levels of Expert Survival mode.
- S6:** Complete the first 12 levels of Expert Survival mode.

32 PLAYSTATION 2 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU DIE

WORDS: JON BROWN

PSW OUTLINES WAY MORE THAN A HANDFUL OF THE GREATEST GAMING MOMENTS EVER. HOW MANY CAN YOU CHALK UP?

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
PETER SIMON WOODWORTH

1979-2003

DEVOTED GAMER AND DVD VIEWER
WHO ATTAINED EMPEROR LEVEL ON VIRTUA FIGHTER 4
MAY YOUR JOYPAD BE FOREVER PLUGGED IN

UNLESS YOU HAPPEN TO BE A leather-skinned 60-year-old Hollywood dame, the sad truth is that you're not getting any younger. And no-one ages faster, plummets downhill from cradle to grave quicker or with less dignity than the dedicated video gamer. Look at the medical evidence: your finger-joints are gradually eroding like sea-front pebbles with every tap of the X button; your dual retinas are noticeably weakening as each moodily lit eight-hour *Resident Evil* marathon passes; and your valiant brain-cells, under siege by *Space Invaders* and robotic ninjas since the early 1980s, are slowly losing their stranglehold on your battle-wearied cranium. Our point is, you've got to make the most of what little time you have left on this cockeyed bucking bronco boffins call 'earth'. Hence the following list, a rundown of 32 things you simply have to do with your PS2 before you die. Best get cracking – the clock's ticking and someone's snapped off the snooze button.



>> PUT YOUR PARENTS INTO THE SIMS AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS

The fun to be had here is in seeing how a gathering of Sims created in the image of your family react when forced to live under the same roof. Will your brother propose to your mother in front of your father, sending poppa headlong into an affair with your younger sister? Will you set fire to the kitchen and lightly toast your auntie Faye? Or will they all just wet themselves and then look at you like it's your fault?



>> PLAY THE TWO-PLAYER MODE IN NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

If you're anything like us, you've frittered away the second half of your life in a relentless attempt to recreate key scenes from Burt Reynolds movies (never let it be said that PSW doesn't understand its readership). Hence number 31, which sees us clearing out a cosy space for the *Need for Speed* in the outer reaches of our list and then fetching the duvet down from the loft. *Hot Pursuit 2* was the first game to allow us to live out our wildest *Smokey and the Bandit* fantasies, and for that we are eternally thankful.

>> PICK UP A HOOKER IN NZ'S VICE CITY

Having sex with a prostitute isn't all glitz and glamour. Sure, it has its moments, but for every second of doe-eyed gooeyness you'll go through two hours of drooping, shrivelled, soul-destroying self-hatred. So we hear. Thank Christ then for *Vice City*, a game that gives you the resources with which to experience the thrill of 'eating out' without saddling you with the extortionate guilt bill. If you've never tried this before, all you need to do is jack a car and cruise around the red-light area until you ensnare a leggy hussy. Then simply pull into a darkened alleyway and look on as the vehicle rocks wildly to the rhythm of the night. Of course, you'll have to import a New Zealand copy for the pleasure(s).



>> PLAY A DANCING GAME. WITH A MAT

The last time you played a dancing game, did you: A) shuffle from side to side for five minutes before mumbling "this is gay", or B) thrash around whole-heartedly in the style of a panda with a Subbuteo player stuck in his paw? If you answered B, nice work. If you answered A, you've got some work to do. Sure, it takes balls to openly prance in front of friends, but like the sneak-theft of a meatball sandwich, the rewards by far outweigh the risks.



>> UNLOCK GIRLY PHOTOS ON BMX XXX, AFTER FIRST IMPORTING FROM THE UK

Don't pretend to your uncle PSW that you're not interested in some dirty snaps. OK so you're going to need the UK version of the game for this mild titillation. And yes we know, it's easy to find dirty pics online, but having to fight through hours of generic biking game, and Ebay, to reach this Valhalla of low-grade grot only makes your eventual 'arrival' all the sweeter, and sweatier.



>> SPEND AN AFTERNOON PLAYING ATV OFFROAD FURY WITH THREE FRIENDS

Pardon? You want us to write something here? But we're taking a tea break. And to be completely honest we didn't actually think that 'Number 27, Spend an afternoon playing ATV with three friends', actually needed clearing up. Fine. It does (mutters something offensive under breath). The reason we've crow-barred in ATV at this point is because it's the single game we've played most as a magazine. Except for *Pro Evolution 2*.



>> COMPLETE THE 'INVITATION TO A PARTY' LEVEL ON HITMAN 2

We loved *Hitman 2*. True, we had our ups and our downs. And yes, the recent allegation that we scratched the word 'Hate' into our review copy before torching it and flushing the ashes down the toilet is completely true. But levels like *Invitation to a Party*, which has you dressed as a waiter attempting to pass off a poisoned glass of bubbly to a dastardly general, made all the heartache worthwhile.



>> BITCH FIGHT FOR YOUR MAN IN DEF JAM VENDETTA

We'd seen girls fighting long before *Vendetta* pimp-limped onto the PS2, just never in the same context. Because the genius twist here is that you're pulling hair for the possession of your man, who can't decide which of you two ladies he wants. Lose and that skanky-ass bitch is going home with your fella. Win and he's all yours. Which is odd and horrible we know, but also brilliant in a way we can't explain.



>> RACE AROUND MONACO IN F1 2002

Formula 1 racing – a thing to make you go 'pffft'. It's dull and stupid. Even we can admit that. But in the right hands, with the right development team behind it, this deeply troubled sport can inspire thrilling, challenging games. So it is that our 24th PlayStation 2 activity to do before you die involves driving around the prettiest of all the F1 world circuits in even the most satisfactory of sims. Give it a go for five minutes. You never know, you might just like it.



>> WITNESS YOUR CLOSE FRIEND SLOWLY EVOLVING INTO THE THING

Two hours into *The Thing* and, plagued by doubts as to who of your party of four you can trust, you instigate another round of blood testing, starting with yourself. The test comes back negative – you're in the clear. The first of your associates takes the test next. And he's fine... for about ten seconds, until the syringe explodes, both of his arms fly off, his head peels away and he starts roaring loudly and running towards you with his mouth open. Your friendship dissolves like liver salt and you begin attempting to rip a hole through the head of a fellow you once spent a weekend in Noosa with, during happier times. One of many classic set-pieces in this much undervalued action title, even if we have completely ruined it by telling you what happens. Oops.

>> COMPLETE THE MESABLANCA COURSE IN SSX TRICKY

Selecting our favourite *SSX Tricky* course was the hardest thing we've had to do since the day that horrid government man came round and made us choose between mummy and daddy. Mesablanca gets the nod thanks to its cascading waterfall, its blazing skyline, its rocky outcrops, its elbow curves and – most importantly of all – its superb shortcuts. Those of you who've already seen all there is to see in *SSX Tricky* can award yourself a bonus point if you've used and abused Mesablanca's abandoned mineshaft route.



>> EXPLORE SNAKE SOLID'S PERVY SIDE IN METAL GEAR SOLID 2

Video game heroes are human too you know. OK so they're not, but some of them can be programmed to act that way. Case in point Snake Solid, a man's man who can't pass a wall-sized photo of a scantily-clad female without drawing in for a closer look. These self-abuse opportunities pop up at various stages in the game. Sometimes Snake can be made to kiss the picture, other times the sheer eroticism of the moment provokes a muffled groan from our secret agent as yet another orgasm is strangled at birth. It's worth noting that these nudie posters can also be used to distract guards, who seem equally at the mercy of forces from within their underpants.



>> PLAY KINGDOM HEARTS

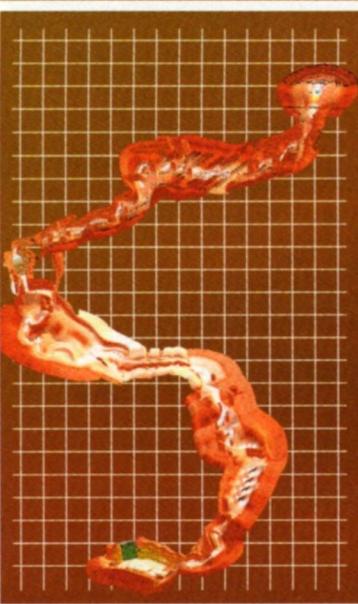
The highlight of this cut 'n' shut *Final Fantasy*/Disneyland mongoloid in the four-letter words of our very own Mark Robins: "Summoning Bambi to come and smack the shit out of the enemies you're fighting while Donald Duck and Goofy wade through the melee, kicking some arse." And he's dead right as well – every self-respecting gamer should play this at least once before the Angel of Death tosses his brown Breville toaster into the tepid, grimy bath of their life.



>> DEFEAT COLONEL NOODLE IN PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2

Play through *Parappa the Rapper 2* and you'll be rewarded with this, an opportunity to debate the relative merits of pasta in relation to sugar-based sweet snacks with a fat kid named Colonel Noodle. And that isn't motivation enough for you to get playing, consider the following rhyme: "Long and chewy, occasionally gooey, The best things in life taste good like chop-suey. Eight minutes to boil and two minutes to eat. Admit it kid, you know noodles can't be beat!" Weirder than a game of *Sketch* the Haemorrhoid with Marlon Brando.





#13

>> WITNESS THE BLITZBALL SEQUENCE IN FINAL FANTASY X

Selected highlights from this, the finest PS2 cut-scene ever: 1) The scene with the mobs of screaming fans running into the Blitzball arena. 2) The barking death metal soundtrack. And 3) The shot where our hero Tidus, who finds himself plunging headfirst towards the ground, first spies megaton fat-baddy Sin towering over the city with a mean look on his face. Exhilarating.



#18

>> PUMMEL THE FLESH TURTLE IN CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER

For us, this boss encounter acts as a break in the clouds during an otherwise miserable, downcast gaming experience. The moment in question: a medium-sized robot falls from the sky, purporting to be the end-of-level baddie. You engage him a gunfight, only to have your deafening clatter rudely interrupted by a 60-story turtle, who plummets to earth with a squelch and immediately starts acting up with his bloody big laser. It's the kind of sequence that makes you glad you were born in the Age of the PlayStation.



#12

>> COMPLETE ICO. THE WHOLE THING.

First the bad news: you play a small child, he's got two big horns and he's been imprisoned in a castle. Now the really bad news: there's not much in the way of combat, there's no guns at all and if don't pay close attention it can all get a mite confoosin'. Finally, the good news: *Ico* is one of the most innovative, charming adventure games we've played over the last ten years. You owe it to yourself to complete it, you know. Apart from anything else, the end sequence is amazing, so good in fact that you can almost convince yourself that the 12 hours of slog were worth it.

>> PLAY SIX-PLAYER GRAN TURISMO 3

For this you will need three PS2s, three TVs, three copies of GT3, three FireWire cables, six joypads and five friends. Which begs the question, why should you bother with number 14? We'll tell you why. Because it's a vulgar display of wealth on a par with the mosque Saddam Hussein constructed in the shape of his own fingerprint. That's why.



#14



#17

>> SEE THE CLAW BEAST IN HALF LIFE

If you're looking for a reference point with regards to this giant green claw monster, look no further than your 88-year-old grandmother. He's short-sighted, just like nanny. He wants to touch you all the time, just like dear old nanny. And he's capable of hearing your slightest utterance, despite being oblivious to all other stimuli, just like sweet, smiling nanny. Hence, the idea here is to be very, very quiet. Get in, do the business and get out. Smashing.



#16

>> DRIVE PAST SOMEWHERE YOU RECOGNISE IN THE GETAWAY

Even grouchy old *PSW* – the only magazine with the nerve to point out that not only was Team Soho's emperor completely naked, but that his pubic hair could do with a damn good trim – giggled like a gaggle of helium-powered schoolgirls when we first drove past Buckingham Palace in *The Getaway*. Learning our way around central London entirely through a PS2 game has to rate as one of strangest experiences ever.



#15

>> JUMP OVER 36 BUSES IN STUNTMAN

Not the hardest of all the challenges we've set out for you by a long way, but very probably the most gratifying. There's no great mystery to it. Simply assault the accelerator, head around the loop-the-loop, hit the ramp at your top speed and sail over the three-dozen bright yellow school buses like a paper swan in zero gravity. Number 15 is noteworthy for being the only entry in our entire countdown where failure is more fun than success.



#11

>> SEE FREAK OUT'S GIANT BOOBS

If you can ever find this 'game', you might want to get the Polaroid ready. For the goal of number 11 is to come into contact with the phenomenally well-stacked boob women in the frankly ugly *Freak Out*. Before you attempt this, a word of warning – the rules when dealing with huge tits do not apply here. For one, you can stare as much as you like, and two, it's best not to try for a closer look, as their swing can cause you a serious amount of harm.

#10

Tuscan

SPEED SIX



Crystal Topaz Pearlescent

VALUE
\$ 20,195

FR 500HP/7400rpm

Distance driven 517.1km

234 day \$ 50,361

SPEC

WHEEL

CHANGE
CAR

SELL



Tuscan Speed 6

>> DRIVE A TVR TUSCAN IN GRAN TURISMO 3

"It handles like a brick, it looks like a greasy stripper and it goes faster than my mum". There are few things better in life than one of these beauties in silver." So sayeth PSW's Richard Melville of the mighty Tuscan, our pick of GT3's motors. Our reasoning is simple – the Tuscan was the first car to make us utter the magic words 'holy shit'. [*We think he means its quick, but then we've never met his mum.]

#09

>> OUT-DANCE MICHAEL JACKSON IN SPACE CHANNEL FIVE

It took the ruination of a thousand perfectly good leatherette slip-ons before the people of Earth came to the conclusion that no-one can move like Michael. Our advice is, as always, don't even bother trying. Instead, invest in a copy of *Space Channel 5* and take on Space Michael, an end-of-level incarnation of nobody's favourite pop star who peddles out a lethal brand of crazy-legged spazmonics. The best part is, out-move Spacko Jacko and he'll concede defeat and join your backing band. Just make sure someone's keeping an eye on him as he dances behind you. Given half a chance he'll order his flying monkeys to swoop down and carry you off to Neverland, where you'll be laminated and forced to have sex with kittens.



#08

>> TAKE DOWN A HELICOPTER IN GRAND THEFT AUTO 3

Let's not beat around the bush people. *Grand Theft Auto 3* is all about being naughty. And nothing in the entire game oozes the sticky lard of utter naughtiness in greater quantities than the act of bringing down a police helicopter with a single, well-placed bazooka shell. As the fireball spirals from the sky, a tear forms in the corner of your eye and splashes down onto the pavement. There's no way back from here. You've come to the end of the road. But man alive, what a way to go.



#07

>> DEFEAT THE CARGO PLANE TYRANT IN RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA

Cross James Bond with George Romero and you up end with our seventh entry, wittily subtitled the Night of the Living Daylights. The scene – you're in a plane, tangling with the headboy from Hades Middle School and the cargo doors are open. Tales of gamers taking one stab at the Cargo Plane Tyrant before removing the disc from their console and never daring to play it again are legendary. Safe to say, this one won't come easy.



#06

>> SLAY PYRAMID HEAD IN SILENT HILL 2

Of *Silent Hill 2*'s many jumpy bits, it's the confrontation with Pyramid Head that we've removed with a rusting scalpel and grafted into our top ten. This particular sequence begins with you hiding out in a wardrobe, from where you witness the aforementioned psychopath commit an act of chilling barbarity. When the slaughter abates, Pyramid Head turns on his heel and begins walking slowly towards your hiding place, dragging his knife behind him. Surely he couldn't have seen you through the slats. Could he? Oh crap. We think he has...



#05

>> CAUSE A \$40MILLION PILE-UP IN BURNOUT 2

The shiniest of all *Burnout 2*'s golden eggs is its Crash mode, which hands you the keys to a sports car and encourages you to drive like a blindfolded alcoholic child into a knot of heavy downtown traffic. The idea is to cause as much damage as you can, both to yourself and everyone else. It takes a real pro to break the \$40million mark, but we're confident that you'll find a way. And even if you don't, you'll have fun trying.



#04

>> ATTAIN EMPEROR LEVEL IN VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

Emperor is the highest rank one can hope to attain in *Virtua Fighter 4*. It's a pinnacle that very few players reach, but one that offers spectacular views of the chattering morons below, all of whom wish they were as good at games as you. To attain this position you'll need to work from the 10th Kyu to the 10th Dan, then through Hero, Champion, Conqueror, Vanquisher, Subjugator, Demonlord, Stormlord and Battlelord.



#03

>> **COMPLETE THE MASTER LEAGUE IN PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2. ON SKILL LEVEL 5**

In all honesty, the actual feat of finishing top of the Master League isn't particularly important to us. It's the amount of time you'll have to spend playing the game to get to this point that we're actually interested in. To give you some idea, we estimate that it should take a decent player two weeks of solid play to steer their team from rank obscurity to glorious victory. Over the course of that fortnight, as you painstakingly upgrade your homebrand players for big-time Charlies with salary demands proportionate to the size of their egos, you'll be forced to master the many disciplines of the greatest football simulation ever created. And that, dear PSW reader, is without question an achievement that every single gamer in the world should have proudly sitting somewhere near the top of their CV, in bold, underlined type.



#02

>> **FLY THE HUNTER HELICOPTER IN VICE CITY**

More graceful than the tank yet still capable of giving the Chief of Police a boulder-sized stomach ulcer, the Hunter helicopter is *Vice City's* most desirable weapon of mass destruction. Not only is it handsomely tooled-up, sporting both a bullet-coughing mini-gun and a front-mounted rocket launcher, it's also robust enough to sustain a number of direct hits without spluttering to the ground. As you'd expect, the game makes you work hard for this marvel of military engineering, forcing you to either locate all 100 secret packages, complete the final story mission or – and here's our personal favourite – steal one directly from the army. Ultimately though it's not important how you track down the Hunter chopper, so long as you do it once before you snuff it. Trust us, it's the second best thing you can do with your PS2.



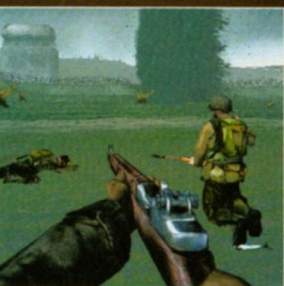
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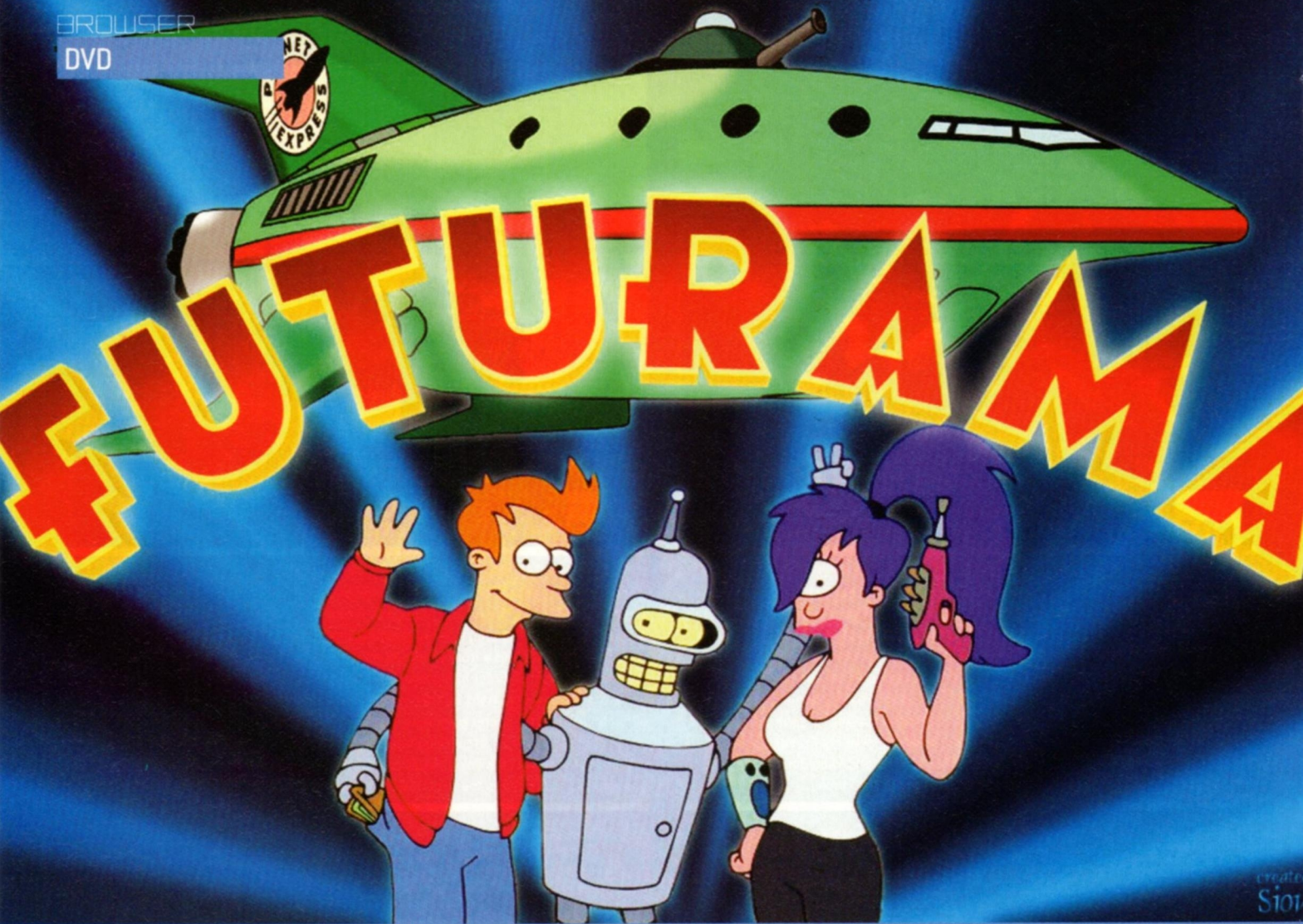
#01



>> **COMPLETE THE BEACH LANDING LEVEL ON MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE**

From the sea-green faces of your nauseous comrades to the split-second of silence between hitting the beach and the striking up of the German gun nests, the Normandy landing level is a magnificently realised exercise in organised chaos. It's in recognition of this fact that we respectfully pin the first place medal onto the chest of *Frontline*, a game that forced us to confront the shocking realisation that, contrary to whatever Arnie and his chum have led us to believe, war actually isn't any fun at all. For the full *Medal of Honor* experience we recommend that you play the level on a 32-inch widescreen TV in scratchy green military clothing, being sure to turn the volume up so loud that you can physically feel the mortar shells thudding into the sand. Do it before you die. And that's an order, Private.





FUTURAMA SEASON 2

ONE OF THE FUNNIEST AND MOST CONSISTENT CARTOONS EVER HITS ITS SECOND SEASON ON DVD IN FULL GLORY.

DISC INFO

Starring

Billy West
Katy Segal
John DiMaggio

Director

David X. Cohen and Matt
Groening

Rating PG

Genre Animated Comedy

Distributor 20th Century Fox

FUTURAMA, THE BREAKAWAY COMEDY FROM

Simpsons creator Matt Groening, has received something of a bad rap since its debut. Late timeslots, jumbled episodes and a pure lack of support have left the series high and dry in mainstream circles. In just five short seasons, *Futurama* is coming to an unjustly end, which is why the collection of seasonal DVD releases is something no fan can really do without.

Not so long ago, Fox released season 1 of *Futurama* on DVD. Not too unlike *The Simpsons* season 1 release, *Futurama* came complete with three wonderful disks packed with extras and the critically acclaimed first episodes of what is arguably one of the funniest comedies since *The Simpsons*. Now, season 2 is set to grace your DVD shelf with 19 episodes spanning four disks. Season 2 offers up some of the best *Futurama* episodes with more Zap Brannigan, more Bender & Fry antics and more freaky Dr. Zoidberg moments. Who can forget the Professor's invention of the "Thinglonger", a device that allowed

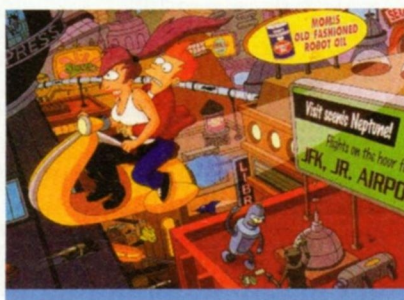
him to turn on the "What If Machine", which in turn gave us a glimpse of Fry eating cereal, *ahem* excuse me, Bachelor Chow off his head? Absolute comedic genius! Other episodes to watch out for include; *War is the H Word*, *How Hermes Got His Groove Back* and *Raging Bender*, among many more. Each episode is replete with clever references a la *The Simpsons*, however, given that *Futurama* is set some 1000 years in the future, cheeky ideas and images can be crammed into almost every scene affording the writers and animators a canvas of comedy ready for the painting. Unlike the first few seasons of *The Simpsons*, *Futurama* avoids the moral driven episodes that plagued our nuclear family and instead goes for pure comedy; the kind of imagery we've come to expect solely from Homer these days. With lines like: "Jamaican? I thought you were some kind of outer space potato man" from Fry riddled throughout, it's hard not to fall in love with the simplicity of *Futurama's* genius. And with the series ending, and no

sign of it ever airing properly in Australia (except on Pay TV), you really have no excuse not to own this wonderful series. Now all we have to do is wait for the amazing season three.

EXTRAS

Look out for the wonderful commentary on each disk, David X. Cohen, Matt Groening, the voice actors and more all pop in for commentary on various episodes offering humorous and insightful glimpses at the series' creation. There's also a huge array of deleted scenes that are usually quite funny, a compilation of sketches and ideas for various characters, storyboards and a few mock ads for things like "Human Rinds" and "Soylent Chow". The presentation is top-notch and delivers the world of *Futurama* perfectly, topping off an awesome DVD collection of an unjustly judged classic in television. RIP *Futurama*, you will be missed, but not forgotten.

★★★★★ Stephen Farrelly





BUFFY: THE VAMPIRE SLAYER SEASON 6

Director Joss Whedon Rating M15+ Genre TV series Distributor Fox

NO ONE THOUGHT THAT THIS BLONDE BRAT FROM LA WOULD MAKE IT OUT OF high school let alone carry a TV series for 7 seasons but undoubtedly... into each generation a show is born. One in all the world, a Chosen One. One born with the strength and skill to outlast them all and when it all boils down to it the success is largely due to one man: creator, writer, producer Joss Whedon.

Season 6 opens with the main character dead, again, and the Scooby gang living on a hell mouth in a slayer-free town using a robot to keep the peace. As ludicrous as it sounds, it's yet another day in Sunnydale with a myriad of directions for the story to branch out to. A mad man would not drive a series into the obscure reaches that Buffy seems continually to go but most series don't have a mad man like Joss Whedon at the helm. Luckily it's from this mind that brilliance such as episodes like "Once More, With Feeling" are fabricated. This episode has the whole cast revealing their innermost thoughts in song as a mysterious force controls Sunnydale. With season 6 being unquestionably the strongest season to date "Once More, With Feeling" is definitely a highlight and is perfectly accompanied as part of the box set by an audio commentary (6 in all) and a featurette about the design and creation of the episode. For those wanting to join the gang there is a Karaoke and a disturbing array of outtakes. It is hard to preach to the uninitiated all the reasons why *Buffy* is addictive but surely it must be the twists and turns created by a man always 10 or 20 steps ahead of his audience that makes for its ultimate success.

★★★★★ Vanessa Morgan



POINT BREAK (1991)

A PRECURSOR TO ATTITUDE ACTION A LA XXX, OR SIMPLY LAME?

Director Kathryn Bigelow Starring: Patrick Swayze, Keanu Reeves Rating M 15+ Genre Drama/Action Distributor Magna Pacific

POINT BREAK STARTED ME THINKING ABOUT ALL the ridiculously inappropriate roles Reeves has played in his career. LA lawyer, reincarnated Buddha, Shakespearean actor, writer and, lately, computer genius and 'the one' just to name a few. So why am I now questioning his role as a FBI agent 12 years after its substituent release? Maybe it's because this is the role that made people start to take him seriously, or because before *Point Break* his roles portrayed him as little more than a stoner. Either way this was the changing point for Keanu Reeves. Take him or leave him it is this film that sent thousands of hearts a flutter and many a boy into the water in search of the thrill - all because of the character Johnny Utah. Like most cops-and-robbers films, in particular of the early eighties, *Point Break* was less about a strong story line and more about creating a visual display of force and speed and for this reason the film is a success. While full of energy and high on action *Point Break* uses goof-ball humour to fill the voids left by a weak plot line and character motives. Full of breathtaking point-of-view shots from plane, water and occasionally even land, the clue-busting team does all the chasing, running and tracking at neck-breaking speeds. But why

can't the FBI catch a group of surfers after three years and 28 bank robberies, and how is it possible they are left with virtually no clues? Perhaps appropriately, we too are left with no clues as to the how, what and why of the film itself. Yes, after 12 years, the DVD has been released with not one extra. Now I know it's a long time for actors to think back but there must be something out there that will help us understand the mystery. Perhaps we will have to wait for the collector's edition 25 years after this release to understand the lingo and clichés.

★★★★★ Vanessa Morgan





Y TU MAMA TAMBIEN (2001)

JUST ANOTHER MEXICAN SEX MOVIE, THE TRIUMPH OF T & A, OR NOTHING MORE THAN A WANKY TEASE?

DISC INFO

Starring

Maribel Verdu
Gael García Bernal
Diego Luna

Director

Alfonso Cuarón

Rating R 18+

Genre Drama

Distributor Magna Pacific

With a cover so sexually explicit that that it is likely to turn the heads of even the most devout Governor-General or porn king amongst us *Y Tu Mama Tambien* ("and your mother too") launched itself into the independent film scene with one hell of a bang. Receiving rave reviews worldwide, the striking imagery for which it has become known is almost a misrepresentation of an often serious and emotional storyline. Not to say this film is sex free but for those looking for porn let it be known that there is definitely much more male nudity than female - and while much time is spent discussing sex very little time is spent in the act. When they do actually get around to it what you view is sloppy, unflattering adolescent (quick) panting, followed by a lot of giggling. [Ahh, the best kind. -Ed] Thankfully this film progresses beyond the giggling to develop into a much deeper and well produced story.

While set up as a love rendezvous about revenge, as Luisa's husband rings in a drunken

state to purge his infidelities, *Y Tu Mama Tambien*, like every road movie ever filmed, is about self-discovery and the bond between the central characters. Unlike most though, this film puts the three in a position of facing a few home-truths that are nothing short of ugly, while these people wake to their sexuality and begin to realise what maturity feels like [Self-discovery... herh herh. -Ed].

Director Alfonso Cuarón worked hard with cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki to make this more than just another low budget independent film, using the beauty and light of their surroundings, instead of flooding the images with the unnatural flat lighting of Hollywood films. The result is that the backdrop of Mexico plays a leading role, breathing life into the story and filling the open spaces with more than just pretty scenery - although there is plenty of that. The country's traditions and culture add a layer to the storyline not to be overlooked. This stylistic approach is not limited purely

to the visual aspects but is consistent throughout the film using constructs such as the narrator.

The narrator has become something of a taboo since its detective heyday in the middle of last century. These days it is rarely used without irony or sarcasm. Yet *Y Tu Mama Tambien's* use of the voice with 'no presence' is the provider of truths, opening the audience to the despair of not just the characters' lives but of life itself. He unobtrusively presents us with stories of a bus crash, a daughter dying, and a fisherman forced from his passion. The story is enriched by his presence and is a highlight of a strong and charming journey.

EXTRAS

The DVD isn't overwhelmed with extras...devoid would be closer to the truth, apart from a reasonable "making-of" documentary. It, like the film, is frank, honest and funny with a light background to the film's placement in Mexican film industry.

With a storyline that sounds like it should be *The (Mexican) Beach* - a journey towards a beach of unbelievable beauty with a torn love affair along the way - *Y Tu Mama Tambien* often comes closer to *Beavis and Butthead*, but does not hold back on any of the raunchier subject matter. As unflattering as it all may be, the film remains a deliberate, charming (even honest) insight into youth and life.

★★★★★ Vanessa Morgan





STEEL ANGEL KURUMI VOL 1 (2002)

Director Naohito Takahashi Rating M15+ Genre Anime Distributor AV Channel

IT ALL STARTS WITH A RUMOUR THAT AN EVIL, MAD PROFESSOR

(is there any other kind?) is performing diabolical experiments on people in his secret lair. Obviously the 'secret' lair isn't quite secret enough as a group of boys dare the weakest among them to enter and uncover what is really taking place. Such is the power of peer pressure, our hero Nakahito boldly enters the mysterious building, and stumbles across one of the android Steel Angels. In an odd twist he kisses her, and as if in a sleeping beauty coma, she awakes becoming his devoted servant. Every boy's fantasy, but with this Android comes one little problem – as is the situation with anything beautiful, someone's hunting her down. Fortunately, apart from her aesthetic charms, she is, predictably, a deadly weapon. This series gets strong as the season progress with writing strengthening and when possible becoming even quirkier than its original premise. Presentation is bright, distinct with extreme attention to detail.

With the extras, we hit the jackpot with an interview with the English voice talents for the series, and an historical background of Japan and additional information about Onmyou tradition and production sketches.

The end of the DVD is hilarious with dozens of Steel Angels competing for Nakahito and for a taste of his miracle kiss. This season is NEVER what you expect. Prepare for a laugh.

★★★★★ Vanessa Morgan



THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951)

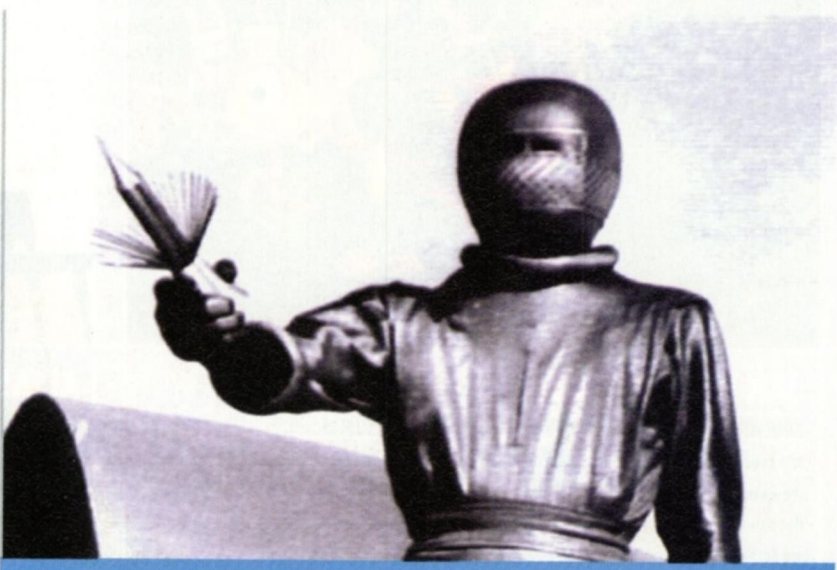
AND YOU THOUGHT STAR WARS OFFERED POLITICAL COMMENTARY

Director Robert Wise Starring Michael Rennie, Patricia Neal Rating G Genre Sci Fi Distributor 20th Century Fox

GIVEN THE ULTIMATUM 'LEARN TO LIVE IN PEACE, or be destroyed', could the world leaders put personal grievances and political grudges aside to save mankind? My money is on world destruction. A social parable, that many of today's leaders would be wise to take note of, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is a wry commentary on the political climate of the 1950's. Loosely based on Harry Bates' short story "Farewell to the Master", *The Day the Earth Stood Still* was produced less than ten years after the first atomic bomb was created and during the period of Cold War paranoia. Inspirational in its outlook and understanding of the current political trends, it is easy to see where and why later films have drawn inspiration from this classic 1950's Sci Fi. The story centres on the arrival of the Humanoid Klaatu (Michael Rennie) to earth to spread the need for peace - only to be immediately shot by a nervous soldier. After being hospitalised he escapes, assuming the identity "Mr. Carpenter" (one of the film's many parallels between Klaatu and Christ), to travel around D.C. with a young boy, trying to find something that will convince him that mankind is worth saving. Digitally remastered this

release is crisp with great definition and does the score the justice it richly deserves. Although its start is lacklustre, it quickly picks up pace as they get into the Cold War mentality of the film and its effects on every being of the generation. Although Robert Wise has a lot to answer for with subsequent films such as *The Sound of Music* and *West Side Story*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* set the benchmark for what Science Fiction could, and inevitably should truly be.

★★★★★ Vanessa Morgan



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JAK II: RENEGADE

LIKE ANT AND DEC, IF ONE OF THEM LOOKED A BIT HUMAN.

It's meaner, darker and all those other words we reserve for sequels. To be honest, we couldn't care less as long as it's the same level of heart-melting platform wonderfulness as *Jak and Daxter*. Judging by this footage, we're in for an absolute treat. We're not convinced by Jak's green do, though. So 1998.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!



ALIAS

TALK ABOUT YOUR HEROINE ADDICTION...

We're always wary of telly-to-game adaptations – step forward, *Dark Angel*, you absolute fool – but this is on another level. Check out our unique appetite-whetting mixture of footage from the hit TV show and in-game action right here. Special moves are looking special, and Jen Garner is looking pretty hot to boot.



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EYETOY: PLAY

FORGET BIG BROTHER – THIS IS BETTER.

You simply have to see how camera peripheral EyeToy works – it's a massive laugh.

You can watch us play from two angles, no less, so we look twice as bad...

1 KUNG FOO

Watch us frown and shout at the camera as we bat off semi-imaginary foes! God, we look stupid. Send us home.

2 WISHI WASHI

When we're cleaning windows, it's a right laugh. Our picture-in-picture feature shows the mime behind the grime.



3 KEEP UPS

We head a football that isn't there into savage soccer-hating monkeys. And you lot wonder why we think Transformers: Armada is a documentary show.

4 ROCKET RUMBLE

Touch the rockets, then trigger them with a touch of the detonator. Or watch us flail in empty space if you so please - it's all part of the picture-in-picture service.

5 UFO JUGGLER

Watch us stroke the spaceships until they go all red and explode in our faces. Oooh, fancy. Look out for the evil ship that needs to be stroked to death! Um...



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Want to know more about every single way to play the mash-up miracle that is *SoulCalibur II*? It's all here in extreme detail, along with a selection of never-before seen fight footage. A must see.



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WAR IS HELL, BUT THIS IS FUN.

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PREVIEWS

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!



FIRE WARRIOR

READY, AIM, DESTROY THE HUMAN RACE.

This shooter set in the *Warhammer 40,000* world is really going to turn some heads. We've got the first look anywhere at the guns, foes and frags right here.

REVIEWS



SILENT HILL 3

GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE GUNS.

Find out just what we thought of the latest *Silent Hill* title, and witness some of its sticky horror for yourself. Bring a pair of fresh trousers, though.

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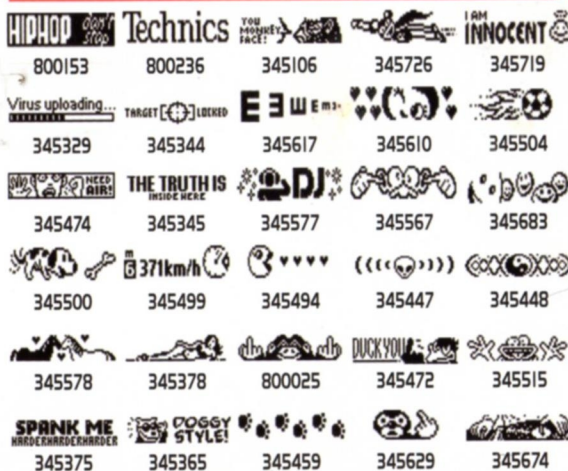
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